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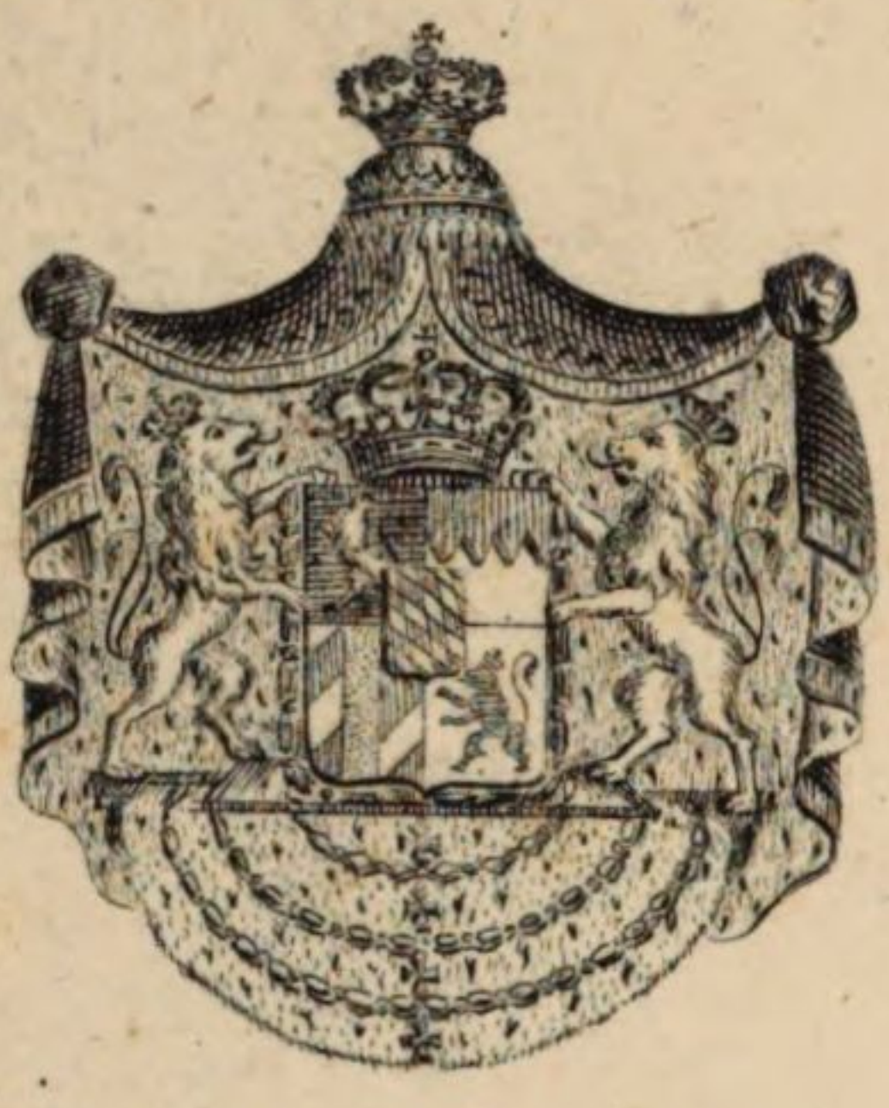

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LEGENDS

OF THE

THIRTEEN REPUBLICS.

« Why, I will fight with him upon this theme,
Until my eyelids will no longer wag.»

BAYERISCHE
STAATS

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LIONEL LINCOLN;

OR,

THE LEAGUER OF BOSTON.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF THE « SPY,» « PILOT,» « PIONEERS,»

etc. etc. etc.

First let me talk with this philosopher.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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1825.

THE TEACHER OF BOSTON

OR

POET PHILOSOPHER

BAYERISCHE
STAATS-
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MÜNCHEN

LIONEL LINCOLN;

OR,

THE LEAGUER OF BOSTON.

CHAPTER I.

« This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna;
Gonzago is the duke's name; his wife, Baptista:
You shall see, anon; 'tis a knavish piece of work.»

Hamlet.

THE agitation and deep excitement produced by the events of the day, had not yet subsided in the town, when Lionel found himself again in its narrow streets. Men passed swiftly by him, as if bent on some unusual and earnest business; and more than once the young sol-

dier detected the triumphant smiles of the women, as they looked curiously out on the scene, from their half-open windows, and their eyes detected the professional trappings of his dress. Strong bodies of the troops were marching in different directions, and in a manner which denoted that the guards were strengthening, while the few solitary officers he met watched his approaching figure with cautious jealousy, as if they apprehended a dangerous enemy in every form they encountered.

The gates of Province-house were open, and, as usual, guarded by armed men. As Lionel passed leisurely along, he perceived that the grenadier to whom he had spoken on the preceding evening, again held his watch before the portal of the governor.

« Your experience did not deceive you, my old comrade,» said Lionel, lingering a moment to address him—« we have had a warm day.»

« So it is reported in the barracks, your honour,» returned the soldier—« our company was not ordered out, and we are to stand

double duty. I hope to God the next time there is any thing to do, the grenadiers of the ——th may not be left behind—it would have been for the credit of the army had they been in the field to-day.»

«Why do you think so, my veteran? The men who were out are thought to have behaved well, but it was impossible to make head against a multitude in arms.»

«It is not my place, your honour, to say this man did well, and that man behaved amiss,» returned the proud old soldier; «but when I hear of two thousand British troops turning their backs, or quickening their march before all the rabble this country can muster, I want the flank companies of the ——th to be at hand, if it should be only that I may say I have witnessed the disgraceful sight with my own eyes.»

«There is no disgrace where there is no misconduct,» said Lionel.

«There must have been misconduct somewhere, your honour, or such a thing could not have happened—consider, your honour, the very flower of the army! Something must

have been wrong, and, although I could see the latter part of the business from the hills, I can hardly believe it to be true.» As he concluded, he shook his head, and continued his steady pace along his allotted ground, as if unwilling to pursue the humiliating subject any further. Lionel passed slowly on, musing on that deep-rooted prejudice, which had even taught this humble menial of the crown to regard with contempt a whole nation, because they were believed to be dependants.

The dock-square was stiller than usual, and the sounds of revelry, which it was usual to hear at that hour from the adjacent drinking-houses, were no longer audible. The moon had not yet risen, and Lionel passed under the dark arches of the market with a quick step, as he now remembered that one in whom he felt so deep an interest awaited his appearance. Job, who had followed in silence, glided by him on the drawbridge, and stood holding the door of the old building in his hand, when he reached its threshold. Lionel found the large space in the centre of the warehouse, as usual, dark and empty,

though the dim light of a candle glimmered through the fissures in a partition which separated an apartment in one of the little towers that was occupied by Abigail Pray, from the ruder parts of the edifice. Low voices were also heard issuing from this room, and Major Lincoln, supposing he should find the old man and the mother of Job in conference together, turned to request the lad would precede him, and announce his name. But the changeling had also detected the whispering sounds, and, it would seem, with a more cunning ear, for he turned and darted through the door of the building with a velocity that did not abate until Lionel, who watched his movements with amazement, saw his shuffling figure disappear among the shambles of the market-place. Thus deserted by his guide, Lionel groped his way towards the place where he believed he should find the door which led into the tower. The light deceived him, for as he approached it, his eye glanced through one of the crevices of the wall, and he again became an unintentional witness of another of those interviews which evinced

the singular and mysterious affinity between the fortunes of the affluent and respected Mrs Lechmere and the miserable tenant of the warehouse. Until that moment, the hurry of events, and the crowd of reflections which had rushed over the mind of the young man throughout the busy time of the last twenty-four hours, had prevented his recalling the hidden meaning of the singular discourse of which he had already been an auditor. But now, when he found his aunt led into these haunts of beggary, by a feeling he was not weak enough to attribute to her charity, he stood rooted to the spot by a curiosity, which, at the same time that he found it irresistible, he was willing to excuse, under a strong impression that these private communications were in some way connected with himself.

Mrs Lechmere had evidently muffled her person in such a manner that was intended to conceal this mysterious visit from any casual observer of her movements; but the hoops of her large calash were now so far raised as to admit a distinct view of her withered features, and of the hard eye which shot forth

its selfish, worldly glances, from amid the surrounding decay of nature. She was seated, both in indulgence to her infirmities, and from that assumption of superiority she never neglected in the presence of her inferiors, while her companion stood before her, in an attitude that partook more of restraint than of respect.

« Your weakness, foolish woman, » said Mrs Lechmere, in those stern repulsive tones she so well knew how to use when she wished to intimidate, « will yet prove your ruin. You owe it to respect for yourself, to your character, and even to your safety, that you should exhibit more firmness, and show yourself above this weak and idle superstition. »

« My ruin ! and my character ! » returned Abigail, looking about her with a haggard eye and a trembling lip ; « what is ruin, Madam Lechmere, if this poverty be not called so ? or what loss of character can bring upon me more biting scorn than I am now ordained to suffer for my sins ! »

« Perhaps, » said Mrs Lechmere, endeavouring to affect a kinder tone, though dislike was

still too evident in her manner, « in the hurry of my grand-nephew's reception, I have forgotten my usual liberality.»

The woman took the piece of silver which Mrs Lechmere slowly placed in her hand, and held it in her open palm for several moments, regarding it with a vacant look, which the other mistook for dissatisfaction.

« The troubles, and the decreasing value of property, have sensibly affected my income,» continued the richly-clad and luxurious Mrs Lechmere; « but if that should be too little for your immediate wants, I will add to it another crown.»

« 'Twill do—'twill do,» said Abigail, clenching her hand over the money, with a grasp that was convulsive—« yes, yes, 'twill do. Oh! Madam Lechmere, humbling and sinful as that wicked passion is, would to God that no motive worse than avarice had proved my ruin!»

Lionel thought his aunt cast an uneasy and embarrassed glance at her companion, which he construed into an expression that betrayed there were secrets even between these strange

confidants: but the momentary surprise exhibited in her features, soon gave place to her habitual look of guarded and severe formality; and she replied, with an air of coldness, as if she would repulse any approach to an acknowledgment of their common transgression,—

« The woman talks like one who is beside herself! of what crime has she been guilty, but such as those to which our nature is liable!»

« True, true,» said Abigail Pray, with a half-stifled hysterical laugh; « 'tis our guilty, guilty nature, as you say. But I grow nervous, I believe, as I grow old and feeble, Madam Lechmere; and I often forget myself. The sight of the grave so very near, is apt to bring thoughts of repentance to such as are more hardened than even I.»

« Foolish girl!» said Mrs Lechmere, endeavouring to screen her pallid features, by drawing down her calash, with a hand that trembled more with terror than with age, « why should you speak thus freely of death, who are but a child!»

Lionel heard the faltering husky tones of

his aunt, as they appeared to die in her throat, but nothing more was distinctly audible, until, after a long pause, she raised her face, and looked about her again with her severe unbending eye, and continued—

«Enough of this folly, Abigail Pray—I have come to learn more of your strange inmate.»

«Oh! 'tis not enough, Madam Lechmere,» interrupted the conscience-stricken woman; «we have so little time left us for penitence and prayer, that there never can be enough, I fear, to answer our mighty transgressions. Let us speak of the grave, Madam Lechmere, while we can yet do it on this side of eternity.»

«Ay! speak of the grave while out of its damp cloisters; 'tis the home of the aged,» said a third voice, whose hollow tones might well have issued from some tomb, «and I am here to join in the wholesome theme.»

«Who—who—in the name of God, who art thou!» exclaimed Mrs Lechmere, forgetting her infirmities, and her secret compunctions in new emotions, and rising involuntarily from

her seat; « tell me, I conjure thee, who art thou ?»

« One, aged like thyself, Priscilla Lechmere, and standing on the threshold of that final home of which you would discourse. Speak on, then, ye widowed women; for, if ever ye have done aught that calls for forgiveness, 'tis in the grave ye shall find the heavenly gift of mercy offered to your unworthiness.»

By changing the position of his body a little Lionel was now enabled to command a view of the whole apartment. In the door-way stood Ralph, immoveable in his attitude, with one hand raised high towards heaven, and the other pointing impressively downward, as if about to lay bare the secrets of that tomb of which his wasted limbs and faded lineaments marked him as a fit tenant, while his searching eye-balls glared about him, from the face of one to the other, with that look of quickness and penetration, that Abigail Pray had so well described as « scorching.» Within a few feet of the old man, Mrs Lechmere remained standing, rigid and motionless as marble, her

calash fallen back, and her death-like features exposed, with horror and astonishment rooted in every muscle, as with open mouth, and eyes riveted on the intruder, she gazed as steadily as if placed in that posture by the chisel of the statuary. Abigail shaded her eyes with her hand, and buried her face in the folds of her garments, while strong convulsive shudderings ran through her frame, and betrayed the extent of the emotions she endeavoured to conceal. Amazed at what he had witnessed, and concerned for the apparent insensibility of his aunt, whose great age rendered such scenes dangerous, Lionel was about to rush into the apartment, when Mrs Lechmere so far recovered her faculties as to speak, and the young man lost every consideration in a burning curiosity, which was powerfully justified by his situation.

«Who is it that calls me by the name of Priscilla?» said Mrs Lechmere; « none now live who can claim to be so familiar.»

«Priscilla—Priscilla,» repeated the old man, looking about him, as if he would require the presence of another; « it is a soft and pleasant

sound to my ears, and there is one that owns it besides thee, as thou knowest.»

« She is dead; years have gone by since I saw her in her coffin; and I would forget her, and all like her, who have proved unworthy of my blood.»

« She is *not* dead!»—shouted the old man, in a voice that rung through the naked rafters of the edifice like the unearthly tones of some spirit of the air; « she lives—she lives—ay! she yet lives!»

« Lives!» repeated Mrs Lechmere, recoiling a step before the forward movement of the other; « why am I so weak as to listen! 'tis impossible.»

« Lives!» exclaimed Abigail Pray, clasping her hands with agony: « Oh! would to God she did live! but did I not see her a bloated, disfigured corpse! did I not with these very hands place the grave-clothes about her once lovely frame! Oh! no—she is dead—dead—and I am a——»

«'Tis some madman that asserts these idle tales,» exclaimed Mrs Lechmere, with a quickness that interrupted the criminal epithet the

other was about to apply to herself. «The unfortunate girl is long since dead, as we know; why should we reason with a maniac?»

«Maniac!» repeated Ralph, with an expression of the most taunting irony; «no—no—no—such an one there is, as you and I well know, but 'tis not I who am mad—thou art rather crazed thyself, woman; thou hast made one maniac already, wouldst thou make another?»

«I!» said Mrs Lechmere, without quailing before the ardent look she encountered—«that God who bestows reason, recals his gift at will; 'tis not I who exercise such power.»

«How say'st thou, Priscilla Lechmere?» cried Ralph, stepping with an inaudible tread so nigh as to grasp, unperceived, her motionless arm with his own wasted fingers; «yes—I will call thee Priscilla, little as thou deservest such a holy name—dost thou deny the power to craze—where, then, is the head of thy boasted race? the proud baronet of Devonshire, the wealthy and respected, and once happy companion of princes—thy nephew

Lionel Lincoln? Is he in the halls of his fathers? leading the armies of his king? ruling and protecting his household?—or is he the tenant of a gloomy cell?—thou knowest he is—thou knowest he is—and woman, thy vile machinations have placed him there!»

«Who is it that dares thus speak to me!» demanded Mrs Lechmere, rallying her faculties with a mighty effort, to look down this charge—« if my unhappy nephew is indeed known to thee, thy own knowledge will refute this base accusation.»

«Known to me! I would ask what is hid from me? I have looked at thee, and observed thy conduct, woman, for the life of man, and nothing that thou hast done is hid from me. I tell thee, I know all. Of this sinful woman here also, I know all—have I not told thee, Abigail Pray, of thy most secret transgressions?»

Oh! yes, yes; he is indeed acquainted with what I had thought was now concealed from every eye but that of God,» cried Abigail, with superstitious terror.

«Nor of thee am I ignorant, thou miserable

widow of John Lechmere; and of Priscilla, too, do I not know all?»

« All !» again exclaimed Abigail.

« All !» repeated Mrs Lechmere, in a voice barely audible, when she sunk back in her chair, in a state of total insensibility. The breathless interest he felt in all that had passed, could detain Lionel no longer from rushing to the assistance of his aunt. Abigail Pray, who, it would seem, had been in some measure accustomed to such scenes with her lodger, retained, however, sufficient self-command to anticipate his motions, and when he had gained the door he found her already supporting, and making the usual applications to Mrs Lechmere. It became necessary to divest the sufferer of her attire, and Abigail assuring Lionel of her perfect competency to act by herself, requested him to withdraw, not only on that account, but because she felt assured that nothing could prove more dangerous to her reviving patient, than his unexpected presence. After lingering a moment, until he witnessed the signs of returning life, Lionel complied with the earnest entreaties of the woman; and leaving the room, he

groped his way to the foot of the ladder, with a determination to ascend to the apartment of Ralph, in order to demand at once an explanation of what he had just seen and heard. He found the old man seated in his little tower, his hand shading his eyes from the feeble light of the miserable candle, and his head drooping upon his bosom, like one in pensive musing. Lionel approached him, without appearing to attract his attention, and was compelled to speak, in order to announce his presence.

« I have received your summons, by Job, » he said, « and have obeyed it. »

« 'Tis well, » returned Ralph.

« Perhaps I should add that I have been an astonished witness of your interview with Mrs Lechmere, and have heard the bold and unaccountable language you have seen proper to use to that lady. »

The old man now raised his head, and Lionel saw the bright rays from his eyes quicken, as he answered.

« You then heard the truth, and witnessed its effects on a guilty conscience. »

« I also heard what you call the truth, in connexion, as you know, with the names most dear to me.»

« Art certain of it, boy?» returned Ralph, looking the other steadily in the face; « has no other become dearer to you, of late, than the authors of your being? speak, and remember that you answer one of no common knowledge.»

« What mean you, sir! is it in nature to love any as we do a parent?»

« Away with this childish simplicity,» continued the other, sternly; « the grandchild of that wretched woman below—do you not love her, and can I put trust in thee?»

« What trust is there incompatible with affection for a being so pure as Cecil Dynevor?»

« Ay,» murmured the old man, in an under tone, « her mother was pure, and why may not the child be worthy of its parentage?» He paused, and a long, and on the part of Lionel, a painful and embarrassed silence succeeded, which was at length broken by Ralph, who said abruptly—« you were in the field to-day, Major Lincoln.»

« Of that you must be certain, as I owe my life to your kind interposition. But why have you braved the danger of an arrest, by trusting your person in the power of the troops? Your presence and activity among the Americans must be known to many in the army besides myself. »

« And would they think of searching for their enemies within the streets of Boston, when the hills without are filling with armed men? My residence in this building is known only to the woman below, who dares not betray me, her worthy son, and to you. My movements are secret and sudden, when men least expect them. Danger cannot touch such as I. »

« But, » said Lionel, hesitating with embarrassment, « ought I to conceal the presence of one whom I know to be inimical to my king? »

« Lionel Lincoln, you over-rate your courage, » interrupted Ralph, smiling in scorn, « you dare not shed the blood of him who has spared your own; but enough of this—we un-

derstand each other, and one old as I should be a stranger to fear.»

« No, no,» said a low solemn voice, from a dark corner of the apartment, where Job had stolen unseen, and was now nestled in security, « you can't frighten Ralph!»

« The boy is a worthy boy, and he knows good from evil; what more is necessary to man in this wicked world!» muttered Ralph, in those quick and indistinct tones that characterized his manner.

« Whence came you, fellow, and why did you abandon me so abruptly?» demanded Lionel.

« Job has just been into the market to see if he couldn't find something that might be good for Nab,» returned the lad.

« Think not to impose on me with this nonsense! Is food to be purchased at any hour of the night, though you had the means!»

« Now that is convincing the king's officers don't know every thing,» said the simpleton, laughing within himself,» here's as good a pound bill, old tenor, as was ever granted by the Bay-Colony, and meat's no such rarity,

that a man who has a pound bill, old tenor, in his pocket, can't go under old Funnel when he pleases, for all their acts of parliament.»

« You have plundered the dead!» cried Lionel, observing that Job exhibited in his hand several pieces of silver, besides the note he had mentioned.

« Don't call Job a thief!» said the lad, with a threatening air; « there's law in the Bay yet, though the people don't use it; and right will be done to all, when the time comes. Job shot a granny, but he's no thief.»

« You were then paid for your secret errand, last night, foolish boy; and have been tempted to run into danger by money. Let it be the last time—in future, when you want, come to me for assistance.»

« Job won't go of ar'nds for the king, if he'd give him his golden crown, with all its di'monds and flauntiness, unless Job pleases, for there's no law for it.»

Lionel, with a view to appease the irritated lad, now made a few kind and conciliating remarks, but the changeling did not deign to reply, falling back in his corner in a sullen

manner, as if he would repair the fatigue of the day by a few moments of sleep. In the mean time Ralph had sunk into a profound reverie, when the young soldier remembered that the hour was late, and he had yet obtained no explanation of the mysterious charges. He therefore alluded to the subject in a manner which he thought best adapted to obtain the desired intelligence. The instant Lionel mentioned the agitation of his aunt, his companion raised his head again, and a smile like that of fierce exultation lighted the wan face of the old man, who answered, pointing with an emphatic gesture to his own bosom—

« 'Twas here, boy, 'twas here—nothing short of the power of conscience, and a knowledge like that of mine, could strike that woman speechless in the presence of any thing human.»

« But what is this extraordinary knowledge? I am in some degree the natural protector of Mrs Lechmere, and independent of my individual interest in your secret, have a right, in her behalf, to require an explanation of such serious allegations.»

« In her behalf!» repeated Ralph. « Wait, impetuous young man, until she bids you push the inquiry—it shall then be answered in a voice of thunder.»

« If not in justice to my aged aunt, at least remember your repeated promises to unfold that sad tale of my own domestic sorrows, of which you claim to be the master.»

« Ay, of that and much more am I in possession,» returned the old man, smiling, as if conscious of his knowledge and power; « if you doubt it, descend and ask the miserable tenant of this warehouse—or the guilty widow of John Lechmere.»

« Nay, I doubt nothing but my own patience; the moments fly swiftly, and I have yet to learn all I wish to know.»

« This is neither the time, nor is it the place, where you are to hear the tale,» returned Ralph; « I have already said that we shall meet beyond the colleges for that purpose.»

« But after the events of this day, who can tell when it will be in the power of an officer of the crown to visit the colleges in safety?»

« What! » cried the old man, laughing aloud, in the bitterness of his scorn, « has the boy found the strength and the will of the despised colonists so soon! But I pledge to thee my word, that thou shalt yet see the place, and in safety.—Yes, yes, Priscilla Lechmere, thy hour is at hand, and thy doom is sealed for ever! »

Lionel again mentioned his aunt, and alluded to the necessity of his soon rejoining her, as he already heard footsteps below, which indicated that preparations were making for her departure. But his petitions and remonstrances were now totally unheeded, his aged companion was pacing swiftly up and down his small apartment, muttering incoherent sentences, in which the name of Priscilla was alone audible, and his countenance betraying the inward workings of absorbing and fierce passions. In a few moments more, the shrill voice of Abigail was heard calling upon her son, in a manner which plainly denoted her knowledge that the changeling was concealed somewhere about the building. Job heard her calls repeated, until the tones

of her voice became angry and threatening, when he stole slowly from his corner, and moved towards the ladder, with a sunken brow and lingering steps. Lionel now knew not how to act. His aunt was still ignorant of his presence, and he thought if Abigail Pray had wished him to appear, he would in some manner be soon included in the summons. He had also his own secret reasons for wishing his visits to Ralph unknown; accordingly, he determined to watch the movements below, under the favour of the darkness, and to be governed entirely by circumstances. He took no leave of his companion on departing, for long use had so far accustomed him to the eccentric manner of the old man, that he well knew any attempt to divert his attention from his burning thoughts, would be futile at a moment of such intense excitement.

From the head of the ladder where Lionel took his stand, he saw Mrs Lechmere, preceded by Job, with a lantern, walking with a firmer step than he could have hoped for, towards the door, and he overheard Abigail, cautioning her wilful son to light her visitor

to a neighbouring corner, where it appeared a conveyance was in waiting. On the threshold, his aunt turned, and the light from the candle of Abigail falling on her features, Lionel caught a full view of her cold, hard eye, which had regained all its worldly expression, though softened a little by a deeper shade of thought than usual.

« Let the scene of to-night be forgotten, my good Abigail,» she said. « Your lodger is a nameless being, who has gleaned some idle tale, and wishes to practise on our credulity to enrich himself. I will consider more of it; but on no account do you hold any further communion with him—I must remove you, my trusty woman; this habitation is unworthy of you, and of your dutiful son, too—I must see you better lodged, my good Abigail, indeed I must.»

Lionel could distinguish the slight shudder that passed through the frame of her companion, as she alluded to the doubtful character of Ralph; but without answering, Abigail held the door open for the departure of her guest. The instant Mrs Lechmere disappeared, Lio-

nel glided down the ladder, and stood before the astonished woman.

« When I tell you I have heard all that passed to-night,» he abruptly said, « you will see the folly of any further attempt at concealment; I now demand so much of your secret as affects the happiness of me or mine.»

« No—no—not of me, Major Lincoln,» said the terrified female—« not of me, for the love of God, not of me—I have sworn to keep it, and one oath——» her emotions choked her, and her voice became indistinct.

Lionel regretted his vehemence, and, ashamed to extort a confession from a woman, he attempted to pacify her feelings, promising to require no further communication at that time.

« Go—go,»—she said, motioning him to depart, « and I shall be well again—leave me, and then I shall be alone with that terrible old man, and my God!»

Perceiving her earnestness, he reluctantly complied, and, meeting Job on the threshold, he ceased to feel any further uneasiness for her safety.

During his rapid walk to Tremont-street, Major Lincoln thought intently on all he had heard and witnessed. He remembered the communications by which Ralph had attained such a powerful interest in his feelings, and he fancied he could discover a pledge of the truth of the old man's knowledge in the guilt betrayed by the manner of his aunt. From Mrs Lechmere his thoughts recurred to her lovely grandchild, and for a moment he was perplexed, by endeavouring to explain her contradictory deportment towards himself;—at one time she was warm, frank, and even affectionate; and at another, as in the short and private interview of that very evening, cold, constrained, and repulsive. Then, again, he recollected the object which had chiefly induced him to follow his regiment to his native country, and the recollection was attended by that shade of dejection which such reflections never failed to cast across his intelligent features. On reaching the house, he ascertained the safe return of Mrs Lechmere, who had already retired to her room, attended by her lovely relatives. Lionel immediately followed

their example, and as the excitement of that memorable and busy day subsided, it was succeeded by a deep sleep, that fell on his senses like the forgetfulness of the dead.

CHAPTER II.

« Now let it work: mischief thou art afoot,
Take thou what course thou wilt ! »

SHAKSPEARE.

THE alarm of the inroad passed swiftly by the low shores of the Atlantic, and was heard echoing among the rugged mountains west of the rivers, as if borne along on a whirlwind. The male population, between the rolling waters of Massachusetts-Bay and the limpid stream of the Connecticut, rose as one man; and as the cry of blood was sounded far inland, the hills and valleys, the highways and footpaths, were seen covered with bands of armed husbandmen, pressing eagerly toward the scene of the war. Within eight-and-forty hours after the fatal meeting at Lexington, it

was calculated that more than a hundred thousand men were in arms; and near one-fourth of that number was gathered before the Peninsulas of Boston and Charles-town. They who were precluded by distance and a want of military provisions to support such a concourse, from participating in the more immediate contest, lay by in expectation of the arrival of that moment when their zeal might also be put to severer trials. In short, the sullen quietude in which the colonies had been slumbering for a year, was suddenly and rudely broken by the events of that day; and the patriotic among the people rose with such a cry of indignation on their lips, that the disaffected, who were no insignificant class in the more southern provinces, were compelled to silence, until the first burst of revolutionary excitement had an opportunity to subside, under the never-failing influence of time and suffering.

Gage, secure in his positions, and supported by a constantly-increasing power, as well as the presence of a formidable fleet, looked on the gathering storm with a steady eye, and

with that calmness which distinguished the mild benevolence of his private character. Though the attitude and the intentions of the Americans could no longer be mistaken, he listened with reluctant ears to the revengeful advice of his counsellors, and rather strove to appease the tumult, than to attempt crushing it by a force, which, though a month before, it had been thought equal to the united power of the peaceful colonists, he now prudently deemed no more than competent to protect itself within its watery boundaries. Proclamations were, however, fulminated against the rebels; and such other measures as were thought indispensable to assert the dignity and authority of the crown were promptly adopted. Of course, these harmless denunciations were disregarded, and all his exhortations to return to an allegiance which the people still denied had ever been impaired, were lost amid the din of arms, and the popular cries of the time. These appeals of the British general, as well as sundry others, made by the royal governors who yet held their rule throughout all the provinces, except

the one in which the scene of our tale is laid, were answered by the people in humble, but manly petitions to the throne for justice; and in loud remonstrances to the parliament, requiring to be restored to the possession of those rights and immunities which should be secured to all who enjoyed the protection of their common constitution. Still the power and prerogatives of the prince were deeply respected, and were alluded to, in all public documents, with the veneration which was thought due to the sacredness of his character and station. But that biting, though grave sarcasm which the colonists knew so well how to use, was freely expended on his ministers, who were accused of devising the measures so destructive to the peace of the empire. In this manner passed some weeks after the series of skirmishes which were called the battle of Lexington, from the circumstance of commencing at the hamlet of that name, both parties continuing to prepare for a mightier exhibition of their power and daring.

Lionel had by no means been an unconcerned spectator of these preparations. The

morning after the return of the detachment, he applied for a command, equal to his just expectations. But while he was complimented on the spirit and loyalty he had manifested on the late occasion, it was intimated to the young man that he might be of more service to the cause of his prince, by devoting his time to the cultivation of his interest among those powerful colonists with whom his family was allied by blood, or connected by long and close intimacies. It was even submitted to his own judgment, whether it would not be well, at some auspicious moment, to trust his person without the defences of the army, in the prosecution of this commendable design. There was so much that was flattering to the self-love, and soothing to the pride of the young soldier, artfully mingled with these ambiguous proposals, that he became content to await the course of events, having, however, secured a promise of obtaining a suitable military command in the case of further hostilities. That such an event was at hand, could not well be concealed from one much less observing than Major Lincoln.

Gage had already abandoned his temporary position in Charles-town, for the sake of procuring additional security by concentrating his force. From the hills of the Peninsula of Boston, it was apparent that the colonists were fast assuming the front of men who were resolved to beleaguer the army of the king. Many of the opposite heights were already crowned with hastily formed works of earth, and a formidable body of these unpractised warriors had set themselves boldly down before the entrance of the isthmus, cutting off all communication with the adjacent country, and occupying the little village of Roxbury, directly before the muzzles of the British guns, with a hardiness that would not have disgraced men much longer tried in the field, and more inured to its dangers.

The surprise created in the army by these appearances of skill and spirit among the hitherto despised Americans, in some measure ceased when the rumour spread itself in their camp, that many gentlemen of the provinces, who had served with credit in the forces of the crown, at former periods, were mingled with

the people in stations of responsibility and command. Among others, Lionel heard the names of Ward and Thomas; men of liberal attainments, and of some experience in arms. Both were regularly commissioned by the Congress of the colony as leaders of their forces; and under their orders were numerous regiments duly organized; possessing all the necessary qualifications of soldiers, excepting the two indispensable requisites of discipline and arms. Lionel heard the name of Warren mentioned oftener than any other in the circles of Province-house, and with that sort of bitterness, which, even while it bespoke their animosity, betrayed the respect of his enemies. This gentleman, who, until the last moment had braved the presence of the royal troops, and fearlessly advocated his principles, while encircled with their bayonets, was now known to have suddenly disappeared from among them, abandoning home, property, and a lucrative profession; and by sharing in the closing scenes of the day of Lexington, to have fairly cast his fortunes on the struggle. But the name which in secret possessed the greatest

charm for the ear of the young British soldier, was that of Putnam, a yeoman of the neighbouring colony of Connecticut, who, as the uproar of the alarm whirled by him, literally deserted his plough, and mounting a beast from its team, made an early halt, after a forced march of a hundred miles, in the foremost ranks of his countrymen. While the name of this sturdy American was passing in whispers among the veterans who crowded the levees of Gage, a flood of melancholy and tender recollections flashed through the brain of the young man. He remembered the frequent and interesting communications which in his boyhood he had held with his own father, before the dark shade had passed across the reason of Sir Lionel, and, in every tale of murderous combats with the savage tenants of the wilds, in each scene of danger and of daring that had distinguished the romantic warfare of the wilderness, and even in strange and fearful encounters with the beasts of the forest, the name of this man was blended with a species of chivalrous fame that is seldom obtained in an enlightened age, and never

undeservedly. The great wealth of the family of Lincoln, and the high expectations of its heir, had obtained for the latter a military rank which at that period was rarely enjoyed by any but such as had bought the distinction by long and arduous services. Consequently, many of his equals had shared in those trials of his father, in which the « Lion heart» of America had been so conspicuous for his deeds. By these grave veterans, who should know him best, the name of Putnam was always mentioned with strong and romantic affection; and when the notable scheme of detaching him, by the promise of office and wealth, from the cause of the colonists was proposed by the cringing counsellors who surrounded the commander-in-chief, it was listened to with a contemptuous incredulity by the former associates of the old partisan, that the result of the plan fully justified. Similar inducements were offered to others among the Americans, whose talents were thought worthy of purchase; but so deep root had the principles of the day taken, that

not a man of any note was found to listen to the proposition.

While these subtle experiments were adopted in the room of more energetic measures, troops continued to arrive from England, and, before the end of May, many leaders of renown appeared in the councils of Gage, who now possessed a disposable force of not less than eight thousand bayonets. With the appearance of these reinforcements, the fallen pride of the army began to revive, and the spirits of the haughty young men who had so recently left the gay parades of their boasted island, were chafed by the reflection that such an army should be cooped within the narrow limits of the peninsula by a band of half-armed husbandmen, destitute alike of the knowledge of war, and of most of its munitions. This feeling was increased by the taunts of the Americans themselves, who now turned the tables on their adversaries, applying, among other sneers, the term of « elbow-room» freely to Burgoyne, one of those chieftains of the royal army, who had boasted unwittingly of

the intention of himself and his compeers, to widen the limits of the army immediately on their arrival at the scene of the contest. The aspect of things within the British camp began to indicate, however, that their leaders were serious in the intention to extend their possessions, and all eyes were again turned to the heights of Charles-town, the spot most likely to be first occupied.

No military positions could be more happily situated, as respects locality, to support each other, and to extend and weaken the lines of their enemies, than the two opposite peninsulas so often mentioned. The distance between them was but six hundred yards, and the deep and navigable waters by which they were nearly surrounded, rendered it easy for the royal general to command, at any time, the assistance of the heaviest vessels of the fleet, in defending either place. With these advantages before them, the army gladly heard those orders issued, which, it was well understood, indicated an approaching movement to the opposite shores.

It was now eight weeks since the com-

mencement of hostilities, and the war had been confined to the preparations detailed, with the exception of one or two sharp skirmishes on the islands of the harbour, between the foragers of the army, and small parties of the Americans, in which the latter well maintained their newly-acquired reputation for spirit.

With the arrival of the regiments from England, gaiety had onee more visited the town, though such of the inhabitants as were compelled to remain against their inclinations, continued to maintain that cold reserve in their deportment, which effectually repelled all the efforts of the officers to include them in the wanton festivities of the time. There were a few, however, among the colonists, who had been bribed, by offices and emoluments, to desert the good cause of the land; and some of these had already been rewarded by offices which gave them access to the ear of the royal governor, who was thought to be unduly and unhappily influenced by the pernicious counsels with which they poisoned his mind and prepared him for acts of injustice

and harshness, that both his unbiassed feelings and ordinary opinions would have condemned. A few days succeeding the affair of Lexington, a meeting of the inhabitants had been convened, and a solemn compact was made between them and the governor, that such as chose to deliver up their arms, might leave the place, while the remainder were promised a suitable protection in their own dwellings. The arms were delivered, but that part of the conditions which related to the removal of the inhabitants was violated, under slight and insufficient pretexts. This and various other causes, incidental to military rule, embittered the feelings of the people, and furnished new causes of complaint; while, on the other hand, hatred was rapidly usurping the place of contempt, in the breasts of those who had been compelled to change their sentiments with respect to a people that they could never love. In this manner, resentment and distrust existed, with all the violence of personality, within the place itself, affording an additional reason to the troops for wishing to extend their limits. Notwithstanding these in-

auspicious omens of the character of the contest, the native kindness of Gage, and perhaps a desire to rescue a few of his own men from the hands of the colonists, induced him to consent to an exchange of the prisoners made in the inroad; thus establishing, in the onset, a precedent to distinguish the controversy from an ordinary rebellion against the loyal authority of the sovereign. A meeting was held, for this purpose, in the village of Charles-town, at that time unoccupied by either army. At the head of the American deputation appeared Warren, and the old partisan of the wilderness, already mentioned, who, by a happy, though not uncommon constitution of temperament, was as forward in deeds of charity as in those of daring. At this interview, several of the veterans of the royal army were present, having passed the straight to hold a last friendly converse with their ancient comrade, who received them with the frankness of a soldier, while he rejected their subtile endeavours to entice him from the banners under which he had enlisted, with a sturdiness as unpretending as it was inflexible.

While these events were occurring at the great scene of the contest, the hum of preparation was to be heard throughout the whole of the wide extent of the colonies. In various places slight acts of hostility were committed, the Americans no longer waiting for the British to be the aggressors, and everywhere such military stores as could be reached were seized, peaceably or by violence, as the case required. The concentration of most of the troops in Boston had, however, left the other colonies comparatively but little to achieve, though, while they still rested, nominally, under the dominion of the crown, they neglected no means within their power to assert their rights in the last extremity.

At Philadelphia «the Congress of the Delegates from the United Colonies,» the body that controlled the great movements of a people who now first began to act as a distinct nation, issued their manifestos, supporting, in a masterly manner, their principles, and proceeded to organize an army that should be as competent to maintain them as circumstances would allow. Gentlemen who had been trained

to arms in the service of the king, were invited to resort to their banners, and the remainder of the vacancies were filled by the names of the youthful, the bold, and adventurous, who were willing to risk their lives in a cause where even success promised so little personal advantage. At the head of this list of untrained warriors, the Congress placed one of their own body, a man already distinguished for his services in the field, and who has since bequeathed to his country the glory of an untarnished name.

CHAPTER III.

« Thou wilt meet me at Philippi ! »

Julius Cæsar.

DURING this period of feverish excitement, while the appearance and privations of war existed, with so little of its danger or its action, Lionel had not altogether forgotten his personal feelings, in the powerful interest created by the state of public affairs. Early on the morning succeeding the night of the scene between Mrs Lechmere and the inmates of the warehouse, he had repaired again to the spot, to relieve the intense anxiety of his mind, by seeking a complete explanation of all those mysteries which had been the principal ligament that bound him to a man, little known, except for his singularities.

The effects of the preceding day's battle were already visible in the market-place, where, as Lionel passed, he saw few, or none of the countrymen who usually crowded the square at that hour. In fact, the windows of the shops were opened with caution, and men looked out upon the face of the sun, as if doubting of its appearance and warmth, as in seasons of ordinary quiet; jealousy and distrust having completely usurped the place of security within the streets of the town. Notwithstanding the hour, few were in their beds, and those who appeared, betrayed by their looks that they had passed the night in watchfulness. Among this number was Abigail Pray, who received her guest in her little tower, surrounded by every thing as he had seen it on the past evening, nothing altered, except her own dark eye, which at times looked like a gem of price set in her squalid features, but which now appeared haggard and sunken, participating more markedly than common in the general air of misery that pervaded the woman.

«I have intruded at a somewhat unusual

hour, Mrs Pray,» said Lionel, as he entered; «but business of the last moment requires that I should see your lodger—I suppose he is above; it will be well to announce my visit.»

Abigail shook her head with an air of solemn meaning, as she answered in a subdued voice, «He is gone!»

«Gone!» exclaimed Lionel; «whither and when?»

«The people seem visited by the wrath of God, sir,» returned the woman; «old and young, the sick and well, are crazy about the shedding of blood; and it's beyond the might of man to say where the torrent will be stayed!»

«But what has this to do with Ralph! where is he? Woman, you are not playing me false?»

«I! Heaven forbid that I should ever be false again! and to you least of all God's creatures! No, no, Major Lincoln; the wonderful man, who seems to have lived so long that he can even read our secret thoughts, as I had supposed man could never read them, has left me, and I know not whether he will ever return.»

« Ever! you have not driven him by violence from under your miserable roof?»

« My roof is like that of the fowls of the air —'tis the roof of any who are so unfortunate as to need it. There is no spot on earth, Major Lincoln, that I can call mine—but one day there will be one; yes, yes, there will be a narrow house provided for us all; and God grant that mine may be as quiet as the coffin is said to be! I lie not, Major Lincoln; no, this time I am innocent of deceit—Ralph and Job have gone together, but whither, I know not, unless it be to join the people without the town; they left me as the moon rose, and he gave me a parting and a warning voice, that will ring in my ears until they are deafened by the damps of the grave.»

« Gone to join the Americans, and with Job!» returned Lionel musing, and without attending to the closing words of Abigail. « Your boy will purchase peril with this madness, Mrs Pray, and should be looked to.»

« Job is not one of God's accountables, nor is he to be treated like other children,» returned the woman. « Ah! Major Lincoln,

a healthier, and a stouter, and a finer boy was not to be seen in the Bay-Province, till the child had reached his fifth year, then, then it was that the judgment of Heaven fell on mother and son; sickness made him what you see, a being with the form, but without the reason of man, and I have grown the wretch I am. But it has all been foretold, and warnings enough have I had of it all; for is it not said, that *He* 'will visit the sins of the fathers upon the children until the third and fourth generation!' Thank God, my sorrows and sins will end with Job, for there never can be a third to suffer!»

« If,» said Lionel, « there be any sin which lies heavy at your heart, every consideration, whether of justice or repentance, should induce you to confess your errors to those whose happiness may be affected by the knowledge, if any such there be. »

The anxious eye of the woman raised itself to meet the look of the young man; but quailing before the piercing gaze it encountered, she quickly turned it upon the litter and confusion of her disordered apartment.

Lionel waited some time for a reply, but finding that she remained obstinately silent, he continued—

« From what has already passed, you must be conscious that I have good reason to believe that my feelings are deeply concerned in your secret; make, then, your confession of the guilt which seems to bear you down so heavily; and in return for the confidence, I promise you my forgiveness and protection.»

As Lionel pressed thus directly the point so near his heart, the woman shrunk away from her situation near him, and her countenance lost, as he proceeded, its remarkable expression of compunction, in a forced look of deep surprise, that showed she was no novice in dissimulation, whatever might be the occasional warnings of her conscience.

« Guilt!» she repeated, in a slow and tremulous voice; « we are all guilty, and would be lost creatures, but for the blood of the Mediator.»

« Most true; but you have spoken of crimes that infringe the laws of man, as well as those of God.»

«I! Major Lincoln—I, a disorderly law breaker!» exclaimed Abigail, affecting to busy herself in arranging her apartment—« it is not such as I that have leisure or courage to break the laws! Major Lincoln is trying a poor lone woman, to make his jokes with the gentlemen of his mess this evening—'tis certain, we all of us have our burthens of guilt to answer for—surely Major Lincoln couldn't have heard Minister Hunt preach his sermon, the last sabbath, on the sins of the town!»

Lionel coloured highly at the artful imputation of the woman, that he was practising on her sex and unprotected situation; and greatly provoked in secret at her duplicity, he became more guarded in his language, endeavouring to lead her on, by kindness and soothing, to the desired communications. But all his ingenuity was met by more than equal abilities on the part of Abigail, from whom he only obtained expressions of surprise, that he could have mistaken her language for more than the usual acknowledgment of errors, that are admitted to be common to our lost nature. In this particular the woman was in no respect

singular; the greater number of those who are loudest in their confessions and denunciations on the abandoned nature of our hearts, commonly resenting, in the deepest manner, the imputation of individual offences. The more earnest and pressing his inquiries became, the more wary she grew, until disgusted with her pertinacity, and secretly suspecting her of foul play with her lodger, he left the house in anger, determining to keep a close eye on her movements, and, at a suitable moment, to strike such a blow as should bring her not only to confession, but to shame.

Under the influence of this momentary resentment, and unable to avoid harbouring the most unpleasant suspicions of his aunt, the young man determined, that very morning, to withdraw himself entirely, as a guest, from her dwelling. Mrs Lechmere, who, if she knew at all that Lionel had been a witness of her intercourse with Ralph, must have received the intelligence from Abigail, received him, at breakfast, with a manner that betrayed no such consciousness. She listened to his excuses for removing with evident concern;

and more than once, as Lionel spoke of the probable nature of his future life, now that hostilities had commenced, the additional trouble his presence would occasion to her habits and years, of his great concern in her behalf: and, in short, of all that he could devise in the way of apology for the step, he saw her eyes turned anxiously on Cecil, with an expression which, at another time, might have led him to distrust the motives of her hospitality. The young lady herself, however, evidently heard the proposal with great satisfaction, and when her grandmother appealed to her opinion, whether he had urged a single good reason for the measure, she answered with a vivacity that had been a stranger to her manner of late—

« Certainly, my dear grandmamma, the best of all reasons—his inclinations. Major Lincoln tires of us, and of our hum-drum habits, and, in my eyes, true politeness requires that we should suffer him to leave us for his barracks, without a word of remonstrance.»

« My motive must be greatly mistaken, if a desire to leave you——»

« Oh! sir, the explanation is not required. You have urged so many reasons, cousin Lionel, that the true and moving motive is yet kept behind the curtain. It must and can be no other than *ennui*.»

« Then I will remain,» said Lionel; « for any thing is better than to be suspected of insensibility.»

Cecil looked both gratified and disappointed—she played with her spoon a moment in embarrassment, bit her beautiful lip with vexation, and then said, in a more friendly tone—

« I must then exonerate you from the imputation—go to your own quarters, if it be agreeable, and we will believe your incomprehensible reasons for the change—besides, as a kinsman, we shall see you every day, you know.»

Lionel had now no longer any excuse for not abiding by his avowed determination; and, notwithstanding Mrs Lechmere parted from her interesting nephew with an exhibition of reluctance that was in singular contrast with her usually cold and formal manner, the

desired removal was made in the course of that very morning.

When this change was accomplished, week after week slipped by, in the manner related in the preceding chapter, during which the reinforcements continued to arrive, and general after general appeared in the place to support the unenterprising Gage in the conduct of the war. The timid amongst the colonists were appalled as they heard the long list of proud and boasted names recounted. There was Howe, a man sprung from a noble race, long known for their deeds in arms, and whose chief had already shed his blood on the soil of America. Clinton, another cadet of an illustrious house, better known for his personal intrepidity and domestic kindness, than for the rough qualities of the warrior. And the elegant and accomplished Burgoyne, who had already purchased a name in the fields of Portugal and Germany, which he was destined soon to lose in the wilds of America. In addition to these might be mentioned Pigot, Grant, Rebertson, and the heir of Northumberland, each of whom led a brigade in the

cause of his prince; besides a host of men of lesser note, who had passed their youth in arms, and were now about to bring their experience to the field, in opposition to the untrained husbandmen of the plains of New England. As if this list was not sufficient to overwhelm their inexperienced adversaries, the pride of arms had gathered many of the young among the noble and chivalric in the British empire, to the point on which all eyes were turned, amongst whom the one who afterwards added the fairest wreath to the laurels of his ancestors, was the joint heir of Hastings and Moira, the gallant, but as yet untried, boy of Rawdon. Amongst such companions, many of whom had been his associates in England, the hours of Lionel passed swiftly by, leaving him but little leisure to meditate on those causes which had brought him also to the scene of contention.

One warm evening, towards the middle of June, Lionel became a witness of the following scene, through the open doors which communicated between his private apartment and

the room which Polwarth had dedicated to what he called « the knowing mess. » M'Fuse was seated at a table, with a ludicrous air of magisterial authority, while Polwarth held a station at his side, which appeared to partake of the double duties of a judge and a scribe. Before this formidable tribunal Seth Sage was arraigned, as it would seem, to answer for certain offences alleged to have been committed in the field of battle. Ignorant that his landlord had not received the benefit of the late exchange, and curious to know what all the suppressed roguery he could detect in the demure countenances of his friends might signify, Lionel dropped his pen, and listened to the succeeding dialogue.

« Now answer to your offences, thou silly fellow with a wise name, » M'Fuse commenced, in a voice that did not fail, by its harsh cadences, to create some of that awe which, by the expression of the speaker's eye it would seem he laboured to produce— « speak out with the freedom of a man, and the compunctions of a Christian, if you have them. Why should I not send you at once

to Ireland, that ye may get your deserts on three pieces of timber, the one being laid cross-wise for the sake of convenience. If you have a contrary reason, bestow it without delay, for the love you bear your own angular daiformities.»

The wags did not altogether fail in their object, Seth betraying a good deal more uneasiness than it was usual for the man to exhibit even in situations of uncommon peril. After clearing his throat, and looking about him, to gather from the eyes of the spectators which way their sympathies inclined, he answered, with a very commendable fortitude—

« Because it's ag'in all law.»

« Have done with your interminable perplexities of the law,» cried M'Fuse, « and do not bother honest gentlemen with its knavery, as if they were no more than so many proctors in big wigs! 'tis the gospel you should be thinking of, you godless reprobate, on account of that final end you will yet make, one day, in a most indecent hurry.»

« To your purpose, Mac,» interrupted Polwarth, who perceived that the erratic feelings

of his friend were beginning already to lead him from the desired point; « or I will propound the matter myself, in a style that would do credit to a mandamus counsellor.»

« The mandamuses are all ag'in the charter, and the law too,» continued Seth, whose courage increased as the dialogue bore more directly upon his political principles—« and to my mind it's quite convincing that if ministers calculate largely on upholding them, there will be great disturbances, if not a proper fight in the land; for the whole country is in a blaze!»

« Disturbances, thou immovable iniquity! thou quiet assassin!» roared M'Fuse; « do ye not call a fight of a day a disturbance, or do ye tar'm skulking behind fences, and laying the muzzle of a musket on the head of Job Pray, and the breach on a mullen-stalk, while ye draw upon a fellow-creature, a commendable method of fighting! Now answer me to the truth, and disdain all lying, as ye would 'ating any thing but cod on a Saturday, who were the two men that fired into my very coun-

tenance, from the unfortunate situation among the mullens that I have detailed to you?»

« Pardon me, Captain M'Fuse,» said Polwarth, « if I say that your zeal and indignation run a-head of your discretion. If we alarm the prisoner in this manner, we may defeat the ends of justice. Besides, sir, there is a reflection contained in your language, to which I must dissent. A real *dumb* is not to be despised, especially when served up in wrapper, and between two coarser fish, to preserve the steam—I have had my private meditations on the subject of getting up a Saturday's club, in order to enjoy the bounty of the Bay, and for improving the cookery of the cod!»[1]

[1] It may be a fit matter of inquiry for the antiquarian, to learn whether the captain ever put his project in execution; and if so, whether he has not the merit of founding that famous association, which, to this hour, maintains the catholic custom of the east, by feasting on the last day of the week on the staple of New-England; and which is said to assemble regularly, with much good-fellowship, around more good wine than is ever encountered at any other board in the known world.

« And let me tell you, Captain Polwarth,» returned the grenadier, cocking his eye fiercely at the other, « that your epicurean propensities lead you to the verge of cannibalism; for surely it may be called *that*, when you speak of 'ating, while the life of a fellow-cr'ature is under a discussion for its termination.»

« I conclude,» interrupted Seth, who was greatly averse to all quarrelling, and who thought he saw the symptoms of a breach between his judges, « the captain wishes to know who the two men were that fired on him a short time before he got the hit in the shoulder?»

« A short time, ye marvellous hypocrite! —'twas as quick as pop and slap could make it.»

« Perhaps there might be some mistake, for a great many of the troops were much disguised.»

« Do ye insinuate that I got drunk before the enemies of my king?» roared the grenadier; « Harkye, Mister Sage, I ask you, in a genteel way, who the two men were that fired

on me, in the manner detailed, and remember that a man may tire of putting questions which are never answered?»

« Why,» returned Seth, who, however expert at prevarication, eschewed with religious horror a direct lie—« I pretty much conclude that they—the captain is sure the place he means was just beyond Menotomy?»

« As sure as men can be,» said Polwarth, « who possess the use of their eyes.»

« Then Captain Polwarth can give testimony to the fact.»

« I believe Major Lincoln's horse carries a small bit of your lead to this moment, Master Sage.»

Seth yielded to this accumulation of evidence against him, and knowing moreover that the grenadier had literally made him a prisoner in the fact of renewing his fire, he sagaciously determined to make a merit of necessity, and candidly to acknowledge his agency in inflicting the wounds. The utmost, however, that his cautious habits would permit him to say, was—

« Seeing there can't well be any mistake,

I seem to think, the two men were chiefly Job and I.»

« Chaifly, you lath of uncertainty!» exclaimed M'Fuse; « if there was any chaif in that cowardly assassination of wounding a Christian, and of also hurting a horse, which, though nothing but a dumb b'aste has better blood than runs in your own beggarly veins, 'twas your own ugly proportions. But I rejoice that you have come to the confessional! —I can now see you hung with felicity—if you have any thing to say, urge it at once, why I should not embark you for Ireland by the first vessel, in a letter to my lord-lieutenant, with a request that he'll give you an early procession, and a d'acent funeral.»

Seth belonged to a class of his countrymen, amongst whom, while there was a superabundance of ingenuity, there was literally no joke. Deceived by the appearance of anger which had in reality blended with the assumed manner of the grenadier, as he dwelt upon the irritating subject of his own injuries, the belief of the prisoner in the sacred protection of the laws became much shaken, and he began to

reflect very seriously on the insecurity of the times, as well as on the despotic nature of the military power. The little humour he had inherited from his puritan ancestors was, though exceedingly quaint, altogether after a different fashion from the off-hand blundering wit of the Irishman; and that manner which he did not possess he could not entirely comprehend, so that as far as a very visible alarm furthered the views of the two conspirators, they were quite successful. Polwarth now took pity on his evident embarrassment, and observed, with a careless manner—

« Perhaps I can make a proposal by which Mr Sage may redeem his neck from the halter, and at the same time essentially serve an old friend.»

« Hear ye that, thou confounder of men and b'astes!» cried M'Fuse—« down on your knees, and thank Mr Paiter Polwarth for the charity of his insinuation.»

Seth was not displeased to hear such amicable intentions announced; but, habitually cautious in all bargaining, he suppressed the exhibition of his satisfaction, and said, with an

air of deliberation that would have done credit to the keenest trader in King-street—that « he should like to hear the terms of the agreement, before he gave his conclusion.»

« They are simply these,» returned Polwarth—« you shall receive your passports and freedom to night, on condition that you sign this bond, whereby you will become obliged to supply our mess as usual, during the time the place is invested, with certain articles of food and nourishment, as herein set forth, and according to the prices mentioned, which the veriest Jew in Duke's-place would pronounce to be liberal. Here; take the instrument, and 'read, and mark,' in order that we may 'inwardly digest.'»

Seth took the paper, and gave it that manner of investigation that he was wont to bestow on every thing which affected his pecuniary interests. He objected to the price of every article, all of which were altered in compliance with his obstinate resistance, and he moreover insisted that a clause should be inserted to exonerate him from the penalty, provided the intercourse should be prohibited by

the authorities of the colony; after which, he continued—

« If the captain will agree to take charge of the things, and become liable, I will conclude to make the trade.»

« Here is a fellow who wants boot in a bargain for his life!» cried the grenadier; « but we will humour his covetous inclinations, Polly, and take charge of the chattels. Captain Polwarth and myself pledge our words to their safe-keeping. Let me run my eyes over the articles,» continued the grenadier, looking very gravely at the several covenants of the bond — « faith, Paiter, you have bargained for a goodly larder! Baif, mutton, pigs, turnips, potatos, melons, and other fruits— there's a blunder, now, that would keep an English mess on a grin for a month, if an Irishman had made it! as if a melon was a fruit, and a potato was not! The devil a word do I see that you have said about a mouthful, except aitables either! Here, fellow, clap your learning to it, and I'll warrant you we yet get a meal out of it, in some manner or other.»

« Wouldn't it be as well to put the last agree-

ment in the writings, too,» said Seth, «in case of accidents?»

«Hear how a knave halters himself!» cried M'Fuse; «he has the individual honour of two captains of foot, and is willing to exchange it for their joint bond! The request is too raisonable to be denied, Polly, and we should be guilty of pecuniary suicide to reject it; so place a small article at the bottom, explanatory of the mistake the gentleman has fallen into.»

Polwarth did not hesitate to comply, and in a very few minutes every thing was arranged to the perfect satisfaction of the parties, the two soldiers felicitating themselves on the success of a scheme which seemed to avert the principal evils of the leaguer from their own mess: and Seth, finding no difficulty in complying with an agreement which was likely to prove so profitable, however much he doubted its validity in a court of justice. The prisoner was now declared at liberty, and was advised to make his way out of the place, with as little noise as possible, and under favour of the pass he held. Seth gave the bond a last and most attentive perusal, and then departed, well con-

tented to abide by its conditions, and not a little pleased to escape from the grenadier, the expression of whose half-comic, half-serious eye, occasioned him more perplexity than any other subject which had ever before occupied his astuteness. After the disappearance of the prisoner, the two worthies repaired to their nightly banquet, laughing heartily at the success of their notable invention.

Lionel suffered Seth to pass from the room, without speaking, but as the man left his own abode with a lingering and doubtful step, the young soldier followed him into the street, without communicating to any one that he had witnessed what had passed, with the laudable intention of adding his own personal pledge for the security of the household goods in question. He, however, found it no easy achievement to equal the speed of a man who had just escaped from a long confinement, and who now appeared inclined to indulge his limbs freely in the pleasure of an unlimited exercise. The velocity of Seth continued unabated, until he had conducted Lionel far into the lower parts of the town, where the latter

perceived him to encouuter a man with whom he turned suddenly under an arch which led into a dark and narrow court. Lionel instantly increased his speed, and as he entered beneath the passage, he caught a glimpse of the lank figure of the object of his pursuit, gliding through the opposite entrance to the court, and, at the same moment, he encountered the man who had apparently induced the deviation in his route. As Lionel stepped a little on one side, the light of a lamp fell full on the form of the other, and he recognised the person of the active leader of the caucus, (as the political meeting he had attended was called,) though so disguised and muffled, that, but for the accidental opening of the folds of his cloak, the unknown might have passed his nearest friend without discovery.

« We meet again!» exclaimed Lionel, in the quickness of surprise; « though it would seem that the sun is never to shine on our interviews!»

The stranger started, and betrayed an evident wish to continue his walk, as though the o her had mistaken his person; then, as if sud

denly recollecting himself, he turned and approached Lionel, with easy dignity, and answered—

«The third time is said to contain the charm! I am happy to find that I meet Major Lincoln unharmed, after the dangers he so lately encountered.»

« The dangers have probably been exaggerated by those who wish ill to the cause of our master,» returned Lionel, coldly.

There was a calm but proud smile on the face of the stranger as he replied—

« I shall not dispute the information of one who bore so conspicuous a part in the deeds of that day; still you will remember, though the march to Lexington was, like our own accidental rencontres, in the dark, that a bright sun shone upon the retreat, and nothing has been hid.»

« Nothing need be concealed,» replied Lionel, nettled by the proud composure of the other, « unless, indeed, the man I address is afraid to walk the streets of Boston in open day.»

« The man you address, Major Lincoln,»

said the stranger, advancing in his warmth a step nearer to Lionel, « has dared to walk the streets of Boston both by day and by night, when the bullies of him you call your master have strutted their hour in the security of peace; and now a nation is up to humble their pretensions, shall he shrink from treading his native soil when he will!»

« This is bold language for an enemy within a British camp! Ask yourself what course my duty requires of me?»

« That is a question which lies between Major Lincoln and his conscience,» returned the stranger; « though,» he added, after a momentary pause, and in a milder tone, as if he recollected the danger of his situation, « the gentlemen of his name and lineage were not apt to be informers when they dwelt in the land of their birth.»

« Neither is their descendant. But let this be the last of our interviews, until we can meet as friends, or as enemies should, where we may discuss these topics at the points of our weapons.»

« Amen,» said the stranger, seizing the

hand of the young man, and pressing it with the warmth of a generous emulation; « that hour may not be far distant, and may God smile only on the just cause.»

Without uttering more, he drew the folds of his dress more closely around his form, and walked so swiftly away, that Lionel, had he possessed the inclination, could not have found an opportunity to arrest his progress. As all expectation of overtaking Seth was now lost, the young soldier returned slowly and thoughtfully towards his quarters.

The two or three succeeding days were distinguished by an appearance of more than usual preparation among the troops, and it became known that officers of rank had closely reconnoitred the grounds of the opposite peninsula. Lionel patiently awaited the progress of events; but as the probability of active service increased, his wishes to make another effort to probe the secret of the tenant of the warehouse revived, and he took his way towards the dock-square, with that object, on the night of the fourth day from the preceding interview with the stranger. It was long after

the tattoo had laid the town in that deep quiet which follows the bustle of a garrison; and as he passed along he saw none but the sentinels pacing their short limits, or an occasional officer returning at that late hour from his revels or his duty. The windows of the warehouse were dark, and its inhabitants, if any it had, were wrapped in deep sleep. Restless and excited, Lionel pursued his walk through the narrow and gloomy streets of the North-end, until he unexpectedly found himself issuing upon the open space that is tenanted by the dead on Copp's-hill. On this eminence the English general had caused a battery of heavy cannon to be raised, and Lionel, unwilling to encounter the challenge of the sentinels, inclining a little to one side, proceeded to the brow of the hill, and, seating himself on a stone, began to muse deeply on his own fortunes, and the situation of the country.

The night was obscure, but the thin vapours which appeared to overhang the place opened at times, when a faint starlight fell from the heavens, and rendered the black hulls of the vessels of war, that lay moored before the

town, and the faint outlines of the opposite shores, dimly visible. The stillness of midnight rested on the scene, and when the loud calls of « all's well» ascended from the ships and batteries, the momentary cry was succeeded by a quiet as deep as if the universe slumbered under this assurance of safety. At such an instant, when even the light breathings of the night air were audible, the sound of rippling waters, like that occasioned by raising a paddle with extreme caution, was borne to the ear of the young soldier. He listened intently, and then bending his eyes in the direction of the faint sounds, he saw a small canoe gliding along on the surface of the water, and soon shoot upon the gravelly shore, at the foot of the hill, with a motion so easy and uniform as scarcely to curl a wave on the land. Curious to know who could be moving about the harbour at this hour, in such a secret manner, Lionel was in the act of rising to descend, when he saw the dim figure of a man land from the boat, and climb the hill, directly in a line with his own position. Suppressing even the sounds of his breath, and drawing his

body back within the deep shadow cast from a point of the hill, a little above him, Lionel waited until the figure had approached within ten feet of him, when it stopped, and appeared, like himself, to be endeavouring to suppress all other sounds and feelings in the absorbing act of deep attention. The young soldier loosened his sword in its sheath before he said,—

« We have chosen a private spot, and a secret hour, sir, for our meditations! »

Had the figure possessed the impalpable nature of an immaterial being, it could not have received this remark, so startling from its suddenness, with greater apathy than did the man to whom it was addressed. He turned slowly towards the speaker, and seemed to look at him earnestly, before he answered, in a low, menacing voice—

« There's a granny on the hill, with a gun and baggonet, walking among the cannon, and if he hears people talking down here, he'll make them prisoners, though one of them should be Major Lincoln. »

« Ha! Job,» said Lionel, « and is it you I meet prowling about like a thief at night! on what errand of mischief have you been sent this time?»

« If Job's a thief for coming to see the graves on Copp's,» returned the lad sullenly, « there's two of them.»

« Well answered, boy!» said Lionel, with a smile; « but I repeat, on what errand have you returned to the town at this unseasonable and suspicious hour?»

« Job loves to come up among the graves, before the cocks crow; they say the dead walk when living men sleep.»

« And would you hold communion with the dead, then?»

« 'Tis sinful to ask them many questions, and such as you do put should be made in the Holy name,» returned the lad, in a tone so solemn, that, connected with the place and the scene, it caused the blood of Lionel to thrill; « but Job loves to be near them, to use him to the damps, ag'in the time he shall be called to walk himself in a sheet at midnight.»

«Hush!» said Lionel, «what noise is that?»

Job stood a moment, listening as intently as his companion, before he answered—

«There's no noise but the moaning of the wind in the bay, or the sea tumbling on the beaches of the islands?»

«'Tis neither,» said Lionel; «I heard the low hum of a hundred voices, or my ears have played me falsely.»

«May be the spirits speak to each other,» said the lad; «they say their voices are like the rushing winds.»

Lionel passed his hand across his brow, and endeavoured to recover the tone of his mind, which had been strangely disordered by the solemn manner of his companion, and walked slowly from the spot, closely attended by the silent changeling. He did not stop until he had reached the inner angle of the wall that enclosed the field of the dead, when he paused, and leaning on the fence, again listened intently.

«Boy, I know not how your silly conversation may have warped my brain,» he said, «but there are surely strange and unearthly

sounds lingering about this place to-night! By Heaven! there is another rush of voices, as if the air above the water were filled with living beings; and then again, I think I hear a noise as if heavy weights were falling to the earth!»

«Ay,» said Job, «'tis the clods on the coffins; the dead are going into their graves ag'in, and 'tis time that we should leave them their own grounds.»

Lionel hesitated no longer, but he rather run than walked from the spot, with a secret horror that, at another moment, he would have blushed to acknowledge, nor did he perceive that he was still attended by Job, until he had descended some distance down Lynn-street. Here he was addressed by his companion, in his usually quiet and unmeaning tones—

«There's the house that the governor built who went down into the sea for money!» he said—«he was a poor boy once, like Job, and now they say his grandson is a great lord, and the king knighted the grand'ther too. It's pretty much the same thing whether a man

gets his money out of the sea or out of the earth; the king will make him a lord for it.»

«You hold the favours of royalty cheap, fellow,» returned Lionel, glancing his eye carelessly at the 'Phipp's-house,' as he passed —«you forget that I am to be some day one of your despised knights!»

«I know it,» said Job; «and you come from America too—it seems to me that all the poor boys go from America to the king to be great lords, and all the sons of the great lords come to America to be made poor boys—Nab says Job is the son of a great lord too!»

«Then Nab is as great a fool as her child,» said Lionel; «but boy, I would see your mother in the morning, and I expect you to let me know at what hour I may visit her.»

Job did not answer, and Lionel, on turning his head, perceived that he was suddenly deserted by the changeling, who was already gliding back towards his favourite haunt among the graves. Vexed at the wild humours of the lad, Lionel hastened to his quarters, and threw himself in his bed, though he heard

the loud cries of «all's well,» again and again, before the strange phantasies which continued to cross his mind would permit him to obtain the rest he sought.

CHAPTER IV.

« We are finer gentlemen, no doubt, than the plain farmers we are about to encounter. Our hats carry a smarter cock, our swords hang more gracefully by our sides, and we make an easier figure in a ball-room; but let it be remembered, that the most finished macaroni amongst us would pass for an errant clown at Pekin.»

Letter from a Veteran Officer, etc.

When the heavy sleep of morning fell upon his senses, visions of the past and future mingled with wild confusion in the dreams of the youthful soldier. The form of his father stood before him, as he had known it in his childhood, fair in the proportions and vigour of manhood, regarding him with those eyes of benignant, but melancholy affection, which characterized their expression after he had become the sole joy of his widowed parent. While his heart was warming at the sight, the

figure melted away, and was succeeded by fantastic phantoms, which appeared to dance among the graves on Copp's, led along in those gambols, which partook of the ghastly horrors of the dead, by Job Pray, who glided among the tombs like a being of another world. Sudden and loud thunder then burst upon them, and the shadows fled into their secret places, from whence he could see, ever and anon, some glassy eyes and spectral faces peering out upon him, as if conscious of the power they possessed to chill the blood of the living. His visions now became painfully distinct, and his sleep was oppressed with their vividness, when his senses burst their unnatural bonds, and he awoke. The air of morning was breathing through his open curtains, and the light of day had already shed itself upon the dusky roofs of the town. Lionel arose from his bed, and had paced his chamber several times, in a vain effort to shake off the images that had haunted his slumbers, when the sounds which broke upon the stillness of the air became too plain to be longer mistaken by a practised ear.

«Ha!» he muttered to himself, «I have been dreaming but by halves; these are the sounds of no fancied tempest, but cannon, speaking most plainly to the soldier.»

He opened his window and looked out upon the surrounding scene. The roar of artillery was now quick and heavy, and Lionel bent his eyes about him to discover the cause of this unusual occurrence. It had been the policy of Gage to await the arrival of his reinforcements, before he struck a blow which was intended to be decisive; and the Americans were well known to be too scantily supplied with the munitions of war to waste a single charge of powder in any of the vain attacks of modern sieges. A knowledge of these facts gave an additional interest to the curiosity with which Major Lincoln endeavoured to penetrate the mystery of so singular a disturbance. Window after window in the adjacent buildings soon exhibited, like his own, its wondering and alarmed spectator. Here and there a half-dressed soldier, or a busy townsman, was seen hurrying along the silent streets, with steps that denoted the eagerness

of his curiosity. Women began to rush wildly from their dwellings, and then, as the sounds broke on their ears with ten-fold heaviness in the open air, they shrunk back into their habitations in pallid dismay. Lionel called to three or four of the men as they hurried by, but, turning their eyes wildly towards his window, they passed on without answering, as if the emergency were too pressing to admit of speech. Finding his repeated inquiries fruitless, he hastily dressed himself, and descended to the street. As he left his own door, a half-clad artillerist hurried past him, adjusting his garments with one hand, and bearing in the other some of the lesser implements of the particular corps in which he served.

« What means the firing, sergeant, » demanded Lionel, « and whither do you hasten with those fuses? »

« The rebels, your honour, the rebels ! » returned the soldier, looking back to speak, without ceasing his speed ; « and I go to my guns ! »

« The rebels ! » repeated Lionel— « what can we have to fear from a mob of country-

men, in such a position—that fellow has slept from his post, and apprehensions for himself mingle with this zeal for his king !»

The towns-people now began to pour from their dwellings in scores; and Lionel imitated their example, and took his course towards the adjacent height of Beacon-hill. He toiled his way up the steep ascent, in company with twenty more, without exchanging a syllable with men who appeared as much astonished as himself at this early interruption of their slumbers, and in a few minutes he stood on the little grassy platform, surrounded by a hundred interested gazers. The sun had just lifted the thin veil of mist from the bosom of the waters, and the eye was permitted to range over a wide field beneath the light vapour. Several vessels were moored in the channels of the Charles and Mystick, to cover the northern approaches to the place; and as he beheld the column of white smoke that was wreathing about the masts of a frigate among them, Lionel was no longer at a loss to comprehend whence the firing proceeded. While he was yet gazing, uncertain of the

reasons which demanded this show of war, immense fields of smoke burst from the side of a ship of the line, who also opened her deep-mouthed cannon, and presently her example was followed by several floating batteries, and lighter vessels, until the wide amphitheatre of hills that encircled Boston were filled with the echoes of a hundred pieces of artillery.

« What can it mean, sir !» exclaimed a young officer of his own regiment, addressing Major Lincoln, « the sailors are in downright earnest, and they scale their guns with shot, I know, by the rattling of the reports !»

« I can boast of a vision no better than your own,» returned Lionel ; « for no enemy can I see. As the guns seemed pointed at the opposite peninsula, it is probable a party of the Americans are attempting to destroy the grass which lies newly mown in the meadows.»

The young officer was in the act of assenting to this conjecture, when a voice was heard above their heads, shouting—

« There goes a gun from Copp's ! They needn't think to frighten the people with their

rake-helly noises; let them blaze away till the dead get out of their graves—the Bay-men will keep the hill!»

Every eye was immediately turned upward, and the wondering and amused spectators discovered Job Pray, seated in the grate of the beacon, his countenance, usually so vacant, gleaming with exultation, while he continued waving his hat high in air, as gun after gun was added to the uproar of the cannonade.

« How now, fellow!» exclaimed Lionel; «what see you? and where are the Bay-men of whom you speak?»

« Where,» returned the simpleton, clapping his hands with childish delight; « why, where they came at dark midnight, and where they'll stand at open noon-day. The Bay-men can look into the windows of old Funnel at last, and not let the reg'lars come on, and they'll teach the godless murderers the law!»

Lionel, a little irritated with the bold language of Job, called to him in an angry voice—

« Come down from that perch, fellow, and explain yourself, or this grenadier shall lift you from your seat, and transfer you to the

post for a little of that wholesome correction which you need.»

« You promised that the grannies should never flog Job ag'in,» said the changeling, crouching down in the grate, whence he looked out at his threatened chastiser with a lowering and sullen eye; « and Job agreed to run your a'r'nds, and not take any of the king's crowns in pay.»

« Come down, then, this instant, and I will remember the compact.»

Comforted by this assurance, which was made in a more friendly tone, Job threw himself carelessly from his iron seat, and clinging to the post, he slid swiftly to the earth, where Major Lincoln immediately arrested him by the arm, and demanded—

« Where are those Bay-men, I once more ask?»

« There!» repeated Job, pointing over the low roofs of the town, in the direction of the opposite peninsula. « They dug their cellar on Breeds, and now they are fixing the underpinnin', and next you'll see what a raising they'll invite the people to!»

The instant the spot was named, all those eyes which had hitherto gazed at the vessels themselves, instead of searching for the object of their hostility, were turned on the green eminence which rose a little to the right of the village of Charles-town, and every doubt was at once removed by the discovery. The high, conical summit of Bunker-hill lay naked and unoccupied, as on the preceding day; but on the extremity of a more humble ridge, which extended within a short distance of the water, a low bank of earth had been thrown up for purposes which no military eye could mistake. This redoubt, small and inartificial as it was, commanded by its position the whole of the inner harbour of Boston, and even endangered, in some measure, the occupants of the town itself. It was the sudden appearance of this magical mound, as the mists of the morning had dispersed, which roused the slumbering seamen; and it had already become the target of all the guns of the shipping in the bay. Amazement at the temerity of their countrymen held the townsmen silent, while Major Lincoln, and the few officers who

stood nigh him, saw at a glance that this step on the part of their adversaries would bring the affairs of the leaguer to an instant crisis. In vain they turned their wondering looks on the neighbouring eminence, and around the different points of the peninsula, in quest of those places of support with which soldiers generally entrench their defences. The husbandmen opposed to them had seized upon the point best calculated to annoy their foes, without regard to the consequences; and in a few short hours, favoured by the mantle of night, had thrown up their work with a dexterity that was only exceeded by their boldness. The truth flashed across the brain of Major Lincoln with his first glance, and he felt his cheeks glow, as he remembered the low and indistinct murmurs which the night air had wafted to his ears, and those inexplicable fancies, which had even continued to haunt him till dispersed by truth and the light of day. Motioning to Job to follow, he left the hill with a hurried step, and when they gained the common, he turned, and said sternly to his companion—

« Fellow, you have been privy to this midnight work!»

« Job has enough to do in the day, without labouring in the night, when none but the dead are out of their places of rest,» returned the lad, with a look of mental imbecility, which immediately disarmed the resentment of the other.

Lionel smiled as he again remembered his own weakness, and repeated to himself—

« The dead! ay, these are the works of the living, and bold men are they who have dared to do the deed. But tell me, Job, for it is vain to attempt deceiving me any longer, what number of Americans did you leave on the hill when you crossed the Charles to visit the graves on Copp's, the past night?»

« Both hills were crowded,» returned the other—« Breeds with the people, and Copp's with the ghosts—Job believes the dead rose to see their children digging so nigh them!»

« 'Tis probable;» said Lionel, who believed it wisest to humour the wild conceits of the lad, in order to disarm his cunning; « but

though the dead are invisible, the living may be counted.»

« Job did count five hundred men, marching over the nose of Bunker, by star-light, with their picks and spades; and then he stopped, for he forgot whether seven or eight hundred came next.»

« And after you ceased to count, did many others pass?»

« The Bay-colony isn't so poorly off for men, that it can't muster a thousand at a raising.»

« But you had a master workman on the occasion? was it the wolf-hunter of Connecticut?»

« There is no occasion to go from the province to find a workman to lay out a cellar!—Dick Gridley is a Boston boy!»

« Ah! he is the chief! we can have nothing to fear then, since the Connecticut woodsman is not at their head?»

« Do you think old Prescott, of Peperel, will quit the hill while he has a kernel of powder to burn!—no, no, Major Lincoln, Ralph himself an't a stouter warrior; and you can't frighten Ralph!»

« But if they fire their cannon often, their small stock of ammunition will be soon consumed, and then they must unavoidably run. »

Job laughed tauntingly, and with an appearance of high scorn, before he answered—

« Yes, if the Bay-men were as dumb as the king's troops, and used such big guns; but the cannon of the colony want but little brimstone, and there's but few of them—let the rake-hellies go up to Breeds; the people will teach them the law! »

Lionel had now obtained all he expected to learn from the simpleton concerning the force and condition of the Americans; and as the moments were too precious to be wasted in vain discourse, he bid the lad repair to his quarters that night, and left him. On entering his own lodgings, Major Lincoln shut himself up in his private apartment, and passed several hours in writing and examining important papers. One letter, in particular, was written, read, torn, and re-written five or six times, until at length he placed his seal, and directed the important paper with a sort of carelessness that denoted his patience was ex-

hausted by repeated trials. These documents were entrusted to Meriton, with orders to deliver them to their several addresses, unless countermanded before the following day, and the young man hastily swallowed a late and light breakfast. While shut up in his closet, Lionel had several times thrown aside his pen to listen, as the hum of the place penetrated to his retirement, and announced the excitement and bustle which pervaded the streets of the town. Having at length completed the task he had assigned himself, he caught up his hat, and took his way, with hasty steps, into the centre of the place.

Cannon were rattling over the rough pavements, followed by ammunition-waggons, and officers and men of the artillery were seen in swift pursuit of their pieces. Aide-de-camps were riding furiously through the streets, charged with important messages; and here and there an officer might be seen issuing from his quarters, with a countenance in which manly pride struggled powerfully with inward dejection, as he caught the last glance of anguish which followed his retiring form, from

eyes that had been used to meet his own with looks of confidence and love. There was, however, but little time to dwell on these flitting glimpses of domestic woe, amid the general bustle and glitter of the scene. Now and then the strains of martial music broke up through the windings of the crooked avenues, and detachments of the troops wheeled by on their way to the appointed place of embarkation. While Lionel stood a moment at the corner of a street, admiring the firm movement of a body of grenadiers, his eye fell on the powerful frame and rigid features of M'Fuse, marching at the head of his company with that gravity which regarded the accuracy of the step amongst the important incidents of life. At a short distance from him was Job Pray, timing his paces to the tread of the soldiers, and regarding the gallant show with stupid admiration, while his ear unconsciously drank the inspiriting music of their band. As this fine body of men passed on, it was immediately succeeded by a battalion, in which Lionel instantly recognised the facings of his own regiment. The warm-hearted Polwarth led

its forward files, and waving his hand, he cried—

«God bless you, Leo, God bless you—we shall make a fair stand-up fight of this; there is an end of all stag-hunting.»

The notes of the horns rose above his voice, and Lionel could do no more than return his cordial salute; when, recalled to his purpose by the sight of his comrades, he turned, and pursued his way to the quarters of the commander-in-chief.

The gate of Province-house was thronged with military men; some waiting for admittance, and others entering and departing with the air of those who were charged with the execution of matters of the deepest moment. The name of Major Lincoln was hardly announced, before an aid appeared to conduct him into the presence of the governor, with a politeness and haste that several gentlemen, who had been waiting for hours, deemed in a trifling degree unjust.

Lionel, however, having little to do with murmurs which he did not hear, followed his conductor, and was immediately ushered into

BAYERISCHE STAATS- BIBLIOTHEK MUENCHEN

the apartment, where a council of war had just closed its deliberations. On the threshold of its door he was compelled to give way to an officer who was departing in haste, and whose powerful frame seemed bent a little in the intensity of thought, as his dark, military countenance lighted for an instant with the salutation he returned to the low bow of the young soldier. Around this chief a group of younger men immediately clustered, and as they departed in company, Lionel was enabled to gather from their conversation that they took their way for the field of battle. The room was filled with officers of high rank, though here and there was to be seen a man in civil attire, whose disappointed and bitter looks announced him to be one of those mandamus counsellors, whose evil advice had hastened the mischief their wisdom could never repair. From out a small circle of these mortified civilians, the unpretending person of Gage advanced to meet Lionel, forming a marked contrast, by the simplicity of its dress, to the military splendour that was glittering around him.

«In what can I oblige Major Lincoln?» he said, taking the young man by the hand cordially, as if glad to be rid of the troublesome counsellors he had so unceremoniously quitted.

« 'Wolfe's own' has just passed me on its way to the boats, and I have ventured to intrude on your excellency to inquire if it were not time its major had resumed his duty?»

A shade of thought was seated for a moment on the placid features of the general, and he then answered with a friendly smile—

« 'Twill be no more than an affair of outposts, and must be quickly ended. But should I grant the request of every brave young man whose spirit is up to-day, it might cost his majesty's service the life of some officer that would make the purchase of the pile of earth too dear.»

« But may I not be permitted to say, that the family of Lincoln is of the province, and its example should not be lost on such an occasion?»

« The loyalty of the colonies is too well represented here to need the sacrifice,» said Gage, glancing his eyes carelessly at the ex-

pecting group behind him.—« My council have decided on the officers to be employed, and I regret that Major Lincoln's name was omitted, since I know it will give him pain: but valuable lives are not to be lightly and unnecessarily exposed.»

Lionel bowed in submission, and after communicating the little he had gathered from Job Pray, he turned away, and found himself near another officer of high rank, who smiled as he observed his disappointed countenance, and taking him by the arm, led him from the room, with a freedom suited to his fine figure and easy air.

« Then, like myself, Lincoln, you are not to battle for the king to-day,» he said, on gaining the anti-chamber. « Howe has the luck of the occasion, if there can be luck in so vulgar an affair. But *allons;* accompany me to Copp's, as a spectator, since they deny us parts in the drama; and perhaps we may pick up materials for a pasquinade, though not for an epic.»

« Pardon me, General Burgoyne,» said Lionel, « if I view the matter with more serious eyes than yourself.»

« Ah! I had forgot that you were a follower of Percy in the hunt of Lexington!» interrupted the other; « we will call it a tragedy, then, if it better suits your humour. For myself, Lincoln, I weary of these crooked streets and gloomy houses, and having some taste for the poetry of nature, would have long since looked out upon the deserted fields of these husbandmen, had the authority, as well as the inclination, rested with me. But Clinton is joining us : he, too, is for Copp's, where we can all take a lesson in arms, by studying the manner in which Howe wields his battalions.»

A soldier of middle age now joined them, whose stout frame, while it wanted the grace and ease of the gentleman who still held Lionel by the arm, bore a martial character, to which the look of the quiet and domestic Gage was a stranger; and followed by their several attendants, the whole party immediately left the government-house to take their destined position on the eminence so often mentioned.

As they entered the street, Burgoyne relinquished the arm of his companion, and moved

with becoming dignity by the side of his brother general. Lionel gladly availed himself of this alteration to withdraw a little from the group, whose steps he followed at such a distance as permitted him to observe those exhibitions of feeling on the part of the inhabitants, which the pride of the others induced them to overlook. Pallid and anxious female faces were gleaming out upon them from every window, while the roofs of the houses, and the steeples of the churches, were beginning to throng with more daring, and equally interested spectators. The drums no longer rolled along the narrow streets, though occasionally the shrill strain of a fife was heard from the water, announcing the movements of the troops to the opposite peninsula. Over all was heard the incessant roaring of the artillery, which, untired, had not ceased to rumble in the air since the appearance of light, until the ear, accustomed to its presence, had learnt to distinguish the lesser sounds we have recorded.

As the party descended into the lower pas-

sages of the town, it appeared deserted by every thing having life, the open windows and neglected doors betraying the urgency of the feelings which had called the population to situations more favourable for observing the approaching contest. This appearance of intense curiosity excited the sympathies of even the old and practised soldiers; and quickening their paces, the whole soon rose from among the gloomy edifices to the open and unobstructed view from the hill.

The whole scene now lay before them. Nearly in their front was the village of Charlestown, with its deserted streets, and silent roofs, looking like a place of the dead; or, if the signs of life were visible within its open avenues, 'twas merely some figure moving swiftly in the solitude, like one who hastened to quit the devoted spot. On the opposite point of the south-eastern face of the peninsula, and at the distance of a thousand yards, the ground was already covered by masses of human beings, in scarlet, with their arms glittering in a noon-day sun. Between the two, though in the more immediate vicinity of the silent

town, the rounded ridge already described, rose abruptly from a flat that was bounded by the water, until, having attained an elevation of some fifty or sixty feet, it swelled gradually to the little crest, where was planted the humble object that had occasioned all this commotion. The meadows, on the right, were still peaceful and smiling, as in the most quiet days of the province, though the excited fancy of Lionel imagined that a sullen stillness lingered about the neglected kilns in their front, and over the whole landscape, that was in gloomy consonance with the approaching scene. Far on the left, across the waters of the Charles, the American camp had poured forth its thousands to the hills; and the whole population of the country, for many miles inland, had gathered to a point, to witness a struggle charged with the fate of their nation. Beacon-hill rose from out the appalling silence of the town of Boston, like a pyramid of living faces, with every eye fixed on the fatal point, and men hung along the yards of the shipping, or were suspended on cornices, cupolas, and steeples, in thoughtless security, while every

other sense was lost in the absorbing interest of the sight. The vessels of war had hauled deep into the rivers, or more properly, those narrow arms of the sea which formed the peninsula, and sent their iron missiles with unwearied industry across the low passage which alone opened the means of communication between the self-devoted yeomen on the hill, and their distant countrymen. While battalion landed after battalion on the point, cannon-balls from the battery of Copp's, and the vessels of war, were glancing up the natural glacis that surrounded the redoubt, burying themselves in its earthen parapet, or plunging with violence into the deserted sides of the loftier height which lay a few hundred yards in its rear; and the black and smoking bombs appeared to hover above the spot, as if pausing to select the places in which to plant their deadly combustibles.

Notwithstanding these appalling preparations, and ceaseless annoyances, throughout that long and anxious morning, the stout husbandmen on the hill had never ceased their steady efforts to maintain, to the uttermost

extremity, the post they had so daringly assumed. In vain the English exhausted every means to disturb their stubborn foes; the pick, the shovel, and the spade continued to perform their offices, and mound rose after mound, amidst the din and danger of the cannonade, steadily, and as well as if the fanciful conceits of Job Pray embraced their real objects, and the labourers were employed in the peaceful pursuits of their ordinary lives. This firmness, however, was not like the proud front which high training can impart to the most common mind; for ignorant of the glare of military show; in the simple and rude vestments of their calling; armed with such weapons as they had seized from the hooks above their own mantels; and without even a banner to wave its cheering folds above their heads, they stood, sustained only by the righteousness of their cause, and those deep moral principles which they had received from their fathers, and which they intended this day should show, were to be transmitted untarnished to their children. It was after-

wards known that they endured their labours and their dangers even in want of that sustenance which is so essential to support animal spirits in moments of calmness and ease; while their enemies, on the point, awaiting the arrival of their latest bands, were securely devouring a meal, which to hundreds among them proved to be their last. The fatal instant now seemed approaching. A general movement was seen among the battalions of the British, who began to spread along the shore, under cover of the brow of the hill—the lingering boats having arrived with the rear of their detachments—and officers hurried from regiment to regiment with the final mandate of their chief. At this moment a body of Americans appeared on the crown of Bunker-hill, and, descending swiftly by the road, disappeared in the meadows to the left of their own redoubt. This band was followed by others, who, like themselves, had broken through the dangers of the narrow pass, by braving the fire of the shipping, and who also hurried to join their comrades on the low land.

The British general determined at once to anticipate the arrival of further reinforcements, and gave forth the long-expected order to prepare for the attack.

CHAPTER V.

"Th' imperious Briton, on the well-fought ground,
No cause for joy, or wanton triumph found,
But saw, with grief, their dreams of conquest vain,
Felt the deep wounds, and mourn'd their vet'rans slain."

Humphreys.

THE Americans had made a show, in the course of that fearful morning, of returning the fire of their enemies, by throwing a few shot from their light field-pieces, as if in mockery of the tremendous cannonade which they sustained. But as the moment of severest trial approached, the same awful stillness which had settled upon the deserted streets of Charles-town, hovered around the redoubt. On the meadows, to its left, the recently arrived bands hastily threw the rails of two

fences into one, and, covering the whole with the mown grass that surrounded them, they posted themselves along the frail defence, which answered no better purpose than to conceal their weakness from their adversaries. Behind this characteristic rampart, several bodies of husbandmen from the neighbouring provinces of New-Hampshire and Connecticut lay on their arms, in sullen expectation. Their line extended from the shore to the base of the ridge, where it terminated several hundred feet behind the works; leaving a wide opening in a diagonal direction, between the fence and an earthen breast-work, which ran a short distance down the declivity of the hill, from the north-eastern angle of the redoubt. A few hundred yards in the rear of this rude disposition, the naked crest of Bunker-hill rose unoccupied and undefended, and the streams of the Charles and Mystick sweeping around its base, approached so near each other as to blend the sounds of their rippling. It was across this low and narrow isthmus, that the royal frigates poured a stream of fire, that never ceased, while around it hovered the

numerous parties of the undisciplined Americans, hesitating to attempt the dangerous passage.

In this manner Gage had, in a great degree, surrounded the devoted peninsula with his power; and the bold men who had so daringly planted themselves under the muzzles of his cannon, were left, as already stated, unsupported, without nourishment, and with weapons from their own gun-hooks, singly to maintain the honour of their nation. Including men of all ages and conditions, there might have been two thousand of them; but as the day advanced, small bodies of their countrymen, taking counsel of their feelings, and animated by the example of the old Partizan of the Woods, who crossed and recrossed the Neck, loudly scoffing at the danger, broke through the fire of the shipping in time to join in the closing and bloody business of the hour.

On the other hand, Howe led more than an equal number of the chosen troops of his prince; and as boats continued to ply between the two peninsulas throughout the afternoon,

the relative disparity continued undiminished to the end of the struggle. It was at this point in our narrative that, deeming himself sufficiently strong to force the defences of his despised foes, the arrangements immediately preparatory to such an undertaking were made in full view of the excited spectators. Notwithstanding the security with which the English general marshalled his warriors, he felt that the approaching contest would be a battle of no common incident. The eyes of tens of thousands were fastened on his movements, and the occasion demanded the richest display of the pageantry of war.

The troops formed with beautiful accuracy, and the columns moved steadily along the shore, and took their assigned stations under cover of the brow of the eminence. Their force was in some measure divided; one moiety attempting the toilsome ascent of the hill, and the other moving along the beach, or in the orchards of the more level ground, towards the husbandmen on the meadows. The latter soon disappeared behind some fruit-trees and the brick-kilns just mentioned. The

advance of the royal columns up the ascent was slow and measured, giving time to their field-guns to add their efforts to the uproar of the cannonade, which broke out with new fury as the battalions prepared to march. When each column arrived at the allotted point, it spread the gallant array of its glittering warriors under a bright sun.

« It is a glorious spectacle, » murmured the graceful chieftain by the side of Lionel, keenly alive to all the poetry of his alluring profession; « how exceedingly soldier-like: and with what accuracy his 'first-arm ascends the hill,' towards his enemy! »

The intensity of his feelings prevented Major Lincoln from replying, and the other soon forgot that he had spoken, in the overwhelming anxiety of the moment. The advance of the British line, so beautiful and slow, resembled rather the ordered steadiness of a drill than an approach to a deadly struggle. Their standards fluttered proudly above them, and there were moments when the wild music of their bands was heard rising on the air, and tempering the ruder sounds of the artillery.

The young and thoughtless in their ranks turned their faces backward, and smiled exultingly, as they beheld steeples, roofs, masts, and heights, teeming with their thousands of eyes, bent on the show of their bright array. As the British lines moved in open view of the little redoubt, and began slowly to gather around its different faces, gun after gun became silent, and the curious artillerist, or tired seaman, lay extended on his heated piece, gazing in mute wonder at the spectacle. There was just then a minute, when the roar of the cannonade seemed passing away like the rumbling of distant thunder.

«They will not fight, Lincoln,» said the animated leader at the side of Lionel, «the military front of Howe has chilled the hearts of the knaves, and our victory will be bloodless!»

«We shall see, sir, we shall see!»

These words were barely uttered, when platoon after platoon, among the British, delivered its fire, the blaze of musketry flashing swiftly around the brow of the hill, and was immediately followed by heavy volleys that

ascended from the orchard. Still no answering sound was heard from the Americans, and the royal troops were soon lost to the eye, as they slowly marched into the white cloud which their own fire had alone created.

« They are cowed, by Heaven the dogs are cowed!» once more cried the gay companion of Lionel, « and Howe is within two hundred feet of them, unharmed!»

At that instant a sheet of flame glanced through the smoke, like lightning playing in a cloud, while at one report a thousand muskets were added to the uproar. It was not altogether fancy which led Lionel to imagine that he saw the smoky canopy of the hill to wave as if the trained warriors it enveloped faltered before this close and appalling discharge; but in another instant, the stimulating war-cry, and the loud shouts of the combatants were borne across the strait to his ears, even amid the horrid din of the combat. Ten breathless minutes flew by like a moment of time, and the bewildered spectators on Copp's were still gazing intently on the scene, when a voice was raised among them, shouting—

« Hurrah! let the rake-hellies go up to Breed's; the people will teach 'em the law!»

« Throw the rebel scoundrel from the hill! Blow him from the muzzle of a gun!» cried twenty soldiers in a breath.

« Hold!» exclaimed Lionel—« 'tis a simpleton, an idiot, a fool!»

But the angry and savage murmurs as quickly subsided, and were lost in other feelings, as the bright red lines of the royal troops were seen issuing from the smoke, waving and recoiling before the still vivid fire of their enemies.

« Ha!» said Burgoyne—« 'tis some feint to draw the rebels from their hold!»

« 'Tis a palpable and disgraceful retreat!» muttered the stern warrior nigh him, whose truer eye detected at a glance the discomfiture of the assailants—« 'Tis another base retreat before the rebels!»

« Hurrah!» shouted the reckless changeling again; « there come the reg'lars out of the orchard too!—see the grannies skulking behind the kilns! Let them go on to Breed's, the people will teach 'em the law!»

No cry of vengeance preceded the act this time, but fifty of the soldiery rushed as by a common impulse, on their prey. Lionel had not time to utter a word of remonstrance, before Job appeared in the air, borne on the uplifted arms of a dozen men, and at the next instant he was seen rolling down the steep declivity, with a velocity that carried him to the water's edge. Springing to his feet, the undaunted changeling once more waved his hat in triumph, and shouted forth again his offensive challenge. Then turning, he launched his canoe from its hiding-place among the adjacent lumber, amid a shower of stones, and glided across the strait; his little bark escaping unnoticed in the crowd of boats that were rowing in all directions. But his progress was watched by the uneasy eye of Lionel, who saw him land and disappear, with hasty steps, in the silent streets of the town.

While this trifling by-play was enacted, the great drama of the day was not at a stand. The smoky veil, which clung around the brow of the eminence, was lifted by the air, and sailed heavily away to the south-west, leaving the

scene of the bloody struggle again open to the view. Lionel witnessed the grave and meaning glances which the two lieutenants of the king exchanged, as they simultaneously turned their glasses from the fatal spot, and taking the one proffered by Burgoyne, he read their explanation in the numbers of the dead that lay profusely scattered in front of the redoubt. At this instant an officer from the field held an earnest communication with the two leaders, when, having delivered his orders, he hastened back to his boat, like one who felt himself employed in matters of life and death.

« It shall be done, sir, » repeated Clinton, as the other departed, his own honest brow sternly knit under high martial excitement.— « The artillery have their orders, and the work will be accomplished without delay. »

« This, Major Lincoln ! » cried his more sophisticated companion, « this is one of the trying duties of the soldier ! To fight, to bleed, or even to die, for his prince, is his happy privilege ; but it is sometimes his unfortunate lot to become the instrument of vengeance. »

Lionel waited but a moment for an explana-

tion—the flaming balls were soon seen taking their wide circuit in the air, and carrying their desolation among the close and inflammable roofs of the opposite town. In a very few minutes a dense, black smoke arose from the deserted buildings, and forked flames played actively along the heated shingles, as though rioting in their unmolested possession of the place. He regarded the gathering destruction in painful silence; and, on bending his looks towards his companions, he fancied, notwithstanding the language of the other, that he read the deepest regret in the averted eye of him who had so unhesitatingly uttered the fatal mandate to destroy.

In scenes like these we are attempting to describe, hours appear to be minutes, and time flies as imperceptibly as life slides from beneath the feet of age. The disordered ranks of the British had been arrested at the base of the hill, and were again forming under the eyes of their leaders, with admirable discipline, and extraordinary care. Fresh battalions, from Boston, marched with high military pride into the line, and every thing be-

tokened that a second assault was at hand. When the moment of stupid amazement which succeeded the retreat of the royal troops had passed, the troops and batteries poured out their wrath with ten-fold fury on their enemies. Shot were incessantly glancing up the gentle acclivity, madly ploughing along its grassy surface, while black and threatening shells appeared to hover above the work like the monsters of the air about to stoop upon their prey.

Still all lay quiet and immovable within the low mounds of earth, as if none there had a stake in the issue of the bloody day. For a few moments only, the tall figure of an aged man was seen slowly moving along the summit of the rampart, calmly regarding the dispositions of the English general in the more distant part of his line, and after exchanging a few words with a gentleman who joined him in his dangerous look-out, they disappeared together behind the grassy banks. Lionel soon detected the name of Prescott of Pepperell, passing through the crowd in low murmurs, and his glass did not deceive him

when he thought, in the smaller of the two, he had himself descried the graceful person of the unknown leader of the 'caucus.'

All eyes were now watching the advance of the battalions, which once more drew nigh the point of contest. The heads of the columns were already in view of their enemies, when a man was seen swiftly ascending the hill from the burning town: he paused amid the peril, on the natural glacis, and swung his hat triumphantly, and Lionel even fancied he heard the exulting cry, as he recognized the ungainly form of the simpleton, before it plunged into the work.

The right of the British once more disappeared in the orchard, and the columns in front of the redoubt again opened with all the imposing exactness of their high discipline.

Their arms were already glittering in a line with the green faces of the mound, and Lionel heard the experienced warrior at his side, murmuring to himself—

« Let him hold his fire, and he will go in at the point of the bayonet ! »

But the trial was too great for even the

practised courage of the royal troops. Volley succeeded volley, and in a few moments they had again curtained their ranks behind the misty screen produced by their own fire. Then came the terrible flash from the redoubt, and the eddying volumes from the adverse hosts rolled into one cloud, enveloping the combatants in its folds, as if to conceal their bloody work from the spectators. Twenty times, in the short space of as many minutes, Major Lincoln fancied he heard the incessant roll of the American musketry die away before the heavy and regular volleys of the troops, and then he thought the sounds of the latter grew more faint, and were given at longer intervals.

The result, however, was soon known. The heavy bank of smoke, which now even clung along the ground, was broken in fifty places, and the disordered masses of the British were seen, driven before their deliberate foes in wild confusion. The flashing swords of the officers in vain attempted to arrest the torrent, nor did the flight cease with many of the regiments until they had even reached their

boats. At this moment a hum was heard in Boston like the sudden rush of wind, and men gazed in each other's faces with undisguised amazement. Here and there a low sound of exultation escaped some unguarded lip, and many an eye gleamed with a triumph that could no longer be suppressed. Until this moment the feelings of Lionel had vacillated between the pride of country and his military spirit, but losing all other feelings in the latter sensation, he now looked fiercely about him, as if he would seek the man who dare exult in the repulse of his comrades. The poetic chieftain was still at his side, biting his nether lip in vexation; but his more tried companion had suddenly disappeared. Another quick glance fell upon his missing form in the act of entering a boat at the foot of the hill. Quicker than thought, Lionel was on the shore, crying as he flew to the water's edge—

« Hold! for God's sake, hold! remember the 47th is in the field, and that I am its major!»

« Receive him,» said Clinton, with that

grim satisfaction with which men acknowledge a valued friend in moments of great trial; «and then row for your lives, or what is of more value, for the honour of the British name.»

The brain of Lionel whirled as the boat shot along its watery bed, but, before it had gained the middle of the stream, he had time to consider the whole of the appalling scene. The fire had spread from house to house, and the whole village of Charles-town, with its four hundred buildings, was just bursting into flames. The air seemed filled with whistling balls, as they hurled above his head, and the black sides of the vessels of war were vomiting their sheets of flame with unwearied industry. Amid this tumult the English general and his companions sprung to land. The former rushed into the disordered ranks, and by his presence and voice recalled the men of one regiment to their duty. But long and loud appeals to their spirit and their ancient fame were necessary to restore a moiety of their former confidence to men who had been thus rudely repulsed, and who now looked

along their thinned and exhausted ranks, missing in many instances more than half the well-known countenances of their fellows. In the midst of the faltering troops stood their stern and unbending chief; but of all those gay and gallant youths who followed in his train, as he had departed from Province-house that morning, not one remained but in his blood. He alone seemed undisturbed in that disordered crowd; and his mandates went forth as usual, calm and determined. At length the panic in some degree subsided, and order was once more restored, as the high-spirited and mortified gentlemen of the detachment regained their lost authority.

The leaders consulted together, apart, and the dispositions were immediately renewed for the assault. Military show was no longer affected, but the soldiers laid down all the useless implements of their trade, and many even cast aside their outer garments, under the warmth of a broiling sun, added to the heat of the conflagration which began to diffuse itself along the extremity of the peninsula. Fresh companies were placed in the

columns, and most of the troops were withdrawn from the meadows, leaving merely a few skirmishers to amuse the Americans who lay behind the fence. When each disposition was completed, the final signal was given to advance.

Lionel had taken post in his regiment, but, marching on the skirt of the column, he commanded a view of most of the scene of battle. In his front moved a battalion, reduced to a handful of men in the previous assaults. Behind these came a party of the marine-guards from the shipping, led by their own veteran major; and next followed the dejected Nesbitt and his corps, amongst whom Lionel looked in vain for the features of the good-natured Polwarth. Similar columns marched on their right and left, encircling three sides of the redoubt by their battalions.

A few minutes brought him in full view of that humble and unfinished mound of earth, for the possession of which so much blood had that day been spilt in vain. It lay, as before, still as if none breathed within its

bosom, though a terrific row of dark tubes were arrayed along its top, following the movements of the approaching columns, as the eyes of the imaginary charmers of our own wilderness are said to watch their victims. As the uproar of the artillery again grew fainter, the crash of falling streets, and the appalling sounds of the conflagration, on their left, became more audible. Immense volumes of black smoke issued from the mouldering ruins, and bellying outward, fold beyond fold, it overhung the work in a hideous cloud, casting its gloomy shadow across the place of blood.

A strong column was now seen ascending, as if from out of the burning town, and the advance of the whole became quick and spirited. A low call ran through the platoons, to note the naked weapons of their adversaries, and it was followed by the cry of « to the bayonet! to the bayonet!»

« Hurrah! for the Royal Irish!» shouted M'Fuse, at the head of the dark column from the conflagration.

« Hurrah!» echoed a well-known voice from the silent mound; «let them come on to Breed's; the people will teach 'em the law!»

Men think at such moments with the rapidity of lightning, and Lionel had even fancied his comrades in possession of the work, when the terrible stream of fire flashed in the faces of the men in front.

« Push on with the ——th,» cried the veteran major of marines—« push on, or the 18th will get the honour of the day!»

« We cannot,» murmured the soldiers of the ——th; « their fire is too heavy!»

« Then break, and let the marines pass through you!»

The feeble battalion melted away, and the warriors of the deep, trained to conflicts of hand to hand, sprang forward, with a loud shout, in their places. The Americans, exhausted of their ammunition, now sullenly sunk back, a few hurling stones at their foes, in desperate indignation. The cannon of the British had been brought to enfilade their short breast-work, which was no longer tenable; and as the columns approached closer to

the low rampart, it became a mutual protection to the adverse parties.

« Hurrah ! for the Royal Irish !» again shouted M'Fuse, rushing up the trifling ascent, which was but of little more than his height.

« Hurrah!» repeated Pitcairn, waving his sword on another angle of the work—« the day's our own?»

One more sheet of flame issued out of the bosom of the work, and all those brave men, who had emulated the examples of their officers, were swept away, as though a whirlwind had passed along. The grenadier gave his war-cry once more before he pitched headlong among his enemies; while Pitcairn fell back into the arms of his own child. The cry of 'Forward, 47th,' rung through their ranks, and in their turn this veteran battalion gallantly mounted the ramparts. In the shallow ditch Lionel passed the dying marine, and caught the dying and despairing look from his eyes, and in another instant he found himself in the presence of his foes. As company followed company into the defenceless redoubt, the

Americans sullenly retired by its rear, keeping the bayonets of the soldiers at bay with clubbed muskets and sinewy arms. When the whole issued upon the open ground, the husbandmen received a close and fatal fire from the battalions which were now gathering around them on three sides. A scene of wild and savage confusion then succeeded to the order of the fight, and many fatal blows were given and taken, the *mêlée* rendering the use of fire-arms nearly impossible for several minutes.

Lionel continued in advance, pressing on the footsteps of the retiring foe, stepping over many a lifeless body in his difficult progress. Notwithstanding the hurry and vast disorder of the fray, his eye fell on the form of the graceful stranger, stretched lifeless on the parched grass, which had greedily drank his blood. Amid the ferocious cries, and fiercer passions of the moment, the young man paused, and glanced his eyes around him with an expression that said, he thought the work of death should cease. At this instant the trappings of his attire caught the glaring eye balls of a dying yeoman, who exerted his wasting

strength to sacrifice one more worthy victim to the manes of his countrymen. The whole of the tumultuous scene vanished from the senses of Lionel at the flash of the musket of this man, and he sunk beneath the feet of the combatants, insensible of further triumph and of every danger.

The fall of a single officer, in such a contest, was a circumstance not to be regarded, and regiments passed over him, without a single man stooping to inquire into his fate. When the Americans had disengaged themselves from the troops, they descended into the little hollow between the two hills, swiftly, and like a disordered crowd, bearing off most of their wounded, and leaving but few prisoners in the hands of their foes. The formation of the ground favoured their retreat, as hundreds of bullets whistled harmlessly above their heads; and by the time they gained the acclivity of Bunker's, distance was added to their security. Finding the field lost, the men at the fence broke away in a body from their position, and abandoned the meadows: the whole moving in confused

masses behind the crest of the adjacent height. The shouting soldiery followed in their footsteps, pouring in fruitless and distant volleys; but on the summit of Bunker their tired platoons were halted, and they beheld the throng move fearlessly through the tremendous fire that enfiladed the low pass, as little injured as though most of them bore charmed lives.

The day was now drawing to a close. With the disappearance of their enemies, the ships and batteries ceased their cannonade, and presently not a musket was heard in that place where so fierce a contest had so long raged. The troops commenced fortifying the outward eminence on which they rested, in order to maintain their barren conquest, and nothing further remained for the achievement of the royal lieutenants, but to go and mourn over their victory.

CHAPTER VI.

« She speaks, yet she says nothing; what of that?
Her eye discourses—I will answer it. »

Romeo.

ALTHOUGH the battle of Bunker-hill was fought while the grass yet lay on the meadows, the heats of summer had been followed by the nipping frosts of November; the leaf had fallen in its hour, and the tempests and biting colds of February had succeeded, before Major Lincoln left that couch where he had been laid, when carried, in total helplessness, from the fatal heights of the peninsula. Throughout the whole of that long period, the hidden bullet had defied the utmost skill of the British surgeons; nor could all their science and

experience embolden them to risk cutting certain arteries and tendons in the body of the heir of Lincoln, which were thought to obstruct the passage to that obstinate lead, which all agreed alone impeded the recovery of the unfortunate sufferer. This indecision was one of the penalties that poor Lionel paid for his greatness; for had it been Meriton who lingered, instead of his master, it is quite probable the case would have been determined at a much earlier hour. At length a young and enterprising leech, with the world before him, arrived from Europe, who, possessing greater skill or more effrontery (the effects are sometimes the same) than his fellows, did not hesitate to decide at once on the expediency of an operation. The medical staff of the army sneered at this bold innovator, and at first were content with such silent testimonials of their contempt. But when the friends of the patient, listening as usual to the whisperings of hope, consented that the confident man of probes should use his instruments, the voices of his contemporaries became not only loud but clamorous. There was a day or two when even

the watch-worn and jaded subalterns of the army forgot the dangers and hardships of the siege, to attend with demure and instructed countenances to the unintelligible jargon of the «medeci» of their camp; and men grew pale, as they listened, who had never been known to exhibit any symptoms of the disgraceful passion before their more acknowledged enemies. But when it became known that the ball was safely extracted, and the patient was pronounced convalescent, a calm succeeded that was much more portentous to the human race than the preceding tempest; and in a short time the daring practitioner was universally acknowledged to be the founder of a new theory. The degrees of M. D. were showered upon his honoured head from half the learned bodies in Christendom, while many of his enthusiastic admirers and imitators became justly entitled to the use of the same magical symbols, as annexments to their patronymics, with the addition of the first letter in the alphabet. The ancient reasoning was altered to suit the modern facts; and before the war was ended, some thousands of

the servants of the crown, and not a few of the patriotic colonists, were thought to have died, scientifically, under the favour of this important discovery.

We might devote a chapter to the minute promulgation of such an event, had not more recent philosophers long since upset the practice, (in which case the theory seems to fall, as a matter of course) by a renewal of those bold adventures, which teach us, occasionally, something new in the anatomy of man; as in the science of geography, the sealers of New-England have been able to discover Terra Australis, where Cook saw nothing but water; or Parry finds veins and arteries in that part of the American continent which had so long been thought to consist of worthless cartilage.

Whatever may have been the effects of the operation on the surgical science, it was healthful, in the first degree, to its subject. For seven weary months Lionel lay in a state in which he might be said to exist, instead of live, but little conscious of surrounding occurrences; and, happily for himself, nearly insensible to pain and anxiety. At moments the

flame of life would apparently glimmer like the dying lamp, and then both the fears and hopes of his attendants were disappointed, as the patient dropped again into that state of apathy in which so much of his time was wasted. From an erroneous opinion of his master's sufferings, Meriton had been induced to make a free use of soporifics, and no small part of Lionel's insensibility was produced by an excessive use of that laudanum for which he was indebted to the mistaken humanity of his valet. At the moment of the operation, the adventurous surgeon had availed himself of the same stupifying drug, and many days of dull, heavy, and alarming apathy succeeded, before his system, finding itself relieved from its unnatural inmate, resumed its healthful functions, and began to renew its powers. By a singular good fortune, his leech was too much occupied by his own novel honours to follow up his success, *secundem artem*, as a great general pushes a victory to the utmost; and that matchless doctor, Nature, was permitted to complete the cure.

When the effects of the anodynes had sub-

sided, the patient found himself entirely free from uneasiness, and dropped into a sweet and refreshing sleep, that lasted for many hours without interruption. He awoke a new man; with his body renovated, his head clear, and his recollections, though a little confused and wandering, certainly better than they had been since the moment when he fell in the *mêlée* on Breeds. This restoration to all the nobler properties of life occurred about the tenth hour of the day; and as Lionel opened his eyes, with understanding in their expression, they fell upon the cheerfulness which a bright sun, assisted by the dazzling light of the masses of snow without, had lent to every object in his apartment. The curtains of the windows had been opened, and every article of the furniture was arranged with a neatness that manifested the studied care which presided over his illness. In one corner, it is true, Meriton had established himself in an easy chair, with an arrangement of attitude which spoke more in favour of his consideration for the valet than the master, while he was comforting his faculties for a night of

watchfulness, by the sweet, because stolen, slumbers of the morning.

A flood of recollections broke into the mind of Lionel together, and it was some little time before he could so far separate the true from the imaginary, as to attain a tolerably clear comprehension of what had occurred in the little age he had been dozing. Raising himself on one elbow, without difficulty, he passed his hand once or twice slowly over his face, and then trusted his voice in a summons to his man. Meriton started at the well-known sounds, and after diligently rubbing his eyes, like one who awakes by surprise, he arose, and gave the customary reply.

«How now, Meriton!» exclaimed Major Lincoln; «you sleep as sound as a recruit on post, and I suppose you have been stationed like one, with twice-told orders to be vigilant.»

The valet stood with open mouth, as if ready to devour his master's words with more senses than one, and then, as Lionel concluded, passed his hands in quick succession over his eyes, as before, though with a very different object, ere he answered—

« Thank God, sir! thank God! you look like yourself once more, and we shall live again as we used to do. Yes, yes, sir,—you'll do now—you'll do this time. That's a miracle of a man, is the great Lon'non surgeon! and now we shall go back to Soho, and live like civilizers. Thank God, sir! thank God! you smile again, and I hope if any thing should go wrong you'll soon be able to give me one of those awful looks that I am so used to, and which makes my heart jump into my mouth, when I know I've been forgetful!»

The poor fellow, in whom long service had created a deep attachment to his master, which had been greatly increased by the solicitude of a nurse, was compelled to cease his unconnected expressions of joy, while he actually wept. Lionel was too much affected by this evidence of feeling, to continue the dialogue for several minutes; during which time he employed himself in putting on part of his attire, assisted by the gulping valet, when, drawing his robe-de-chambre around his person, he leaned on the shoulder of his

man, and took the seat which the other had so recently quitted.

« Well, well, Meriton, that will do,» said Lionel, giving a deep hem, as though his breathing was obstructed; « that will do, silly fellow; I trust I shall live to give you many a frown, and some few guineas, yet. I have been shot, I know.»

« Shot, sir!» interrupted the valet—« you have been downright and unlawfully murdered! you were first shot, and then baggoneted, and after that a troop of horse rode over you. I had it from one of the Royal Irish, who lay by your side the whole time, and who now lives to tell of it—a good honest fellow is Terence, and if such a thing was possible that your honour was poor enough to need a pension, he would cheerfully swear to your hurts at the King's Bench, or War-office; Bridewell, or St James's, its all one to the like of him.»

« I dare say, I dare say,» said Lionel, smiling, though he mechanically passed his hand over his body, as his valet spoke of the bayonet;

« but the poor fellow must have transferred some of his own wounds to my person, I own the bullet, but object to the cavalry and the steel.»

« No, sir, *I* own the bullet, and it shall be buried with me in my dressing-box, at the head of my grave,» said Meriton, exhibiting the flattened bit of lead, exultingly, in the palm of his hand. « it has been in my pocket these thirteen days, after tormenting your honour for six long months, hid in the what d'ye call 'em muscles, away behind the thing-umy artery. But, snug as it was, we got it out! he is a miracle is the great Lon'non surgeon!»

Lionel reached over to his purse, which Meriton had placed regularly on the table, each morning, in order to remove again at night, and dropping several guineas in the hand of his valet, said—

« So much lead must need some gold to sweeten it. Put up the unseemly thing, and never let me see it again!»

Meriton coolly took the opposing metals, and after glancing his eyes at the guineas, with a readiness that embraced their amount in a

single look, he dropped them carelessly into one pocket, while he restored the lead to the other with an exceeding attention to its preservation. He then turned his hand to the customary duties of his station.

« I remember well to have been in a fight on the heights of Charles-town, even to the instant when I got my hurt,» continued his master,» and I even recollect many things that have occurred since; a period which appears like a whole life to me. But after all, Meriton, I believe my ideas have not been remarkable for their clearness.»

« Lord, sir, you have talked to me, and scolded me, and praised me a hundred and a hundred times over again; but you have never scolded as sharp like as you can, nor have you ever spoken and looked as bright as you do this morning!»

« I am in the house of Mrs Lechmere, again,» continued Lionel, examining the room; « I know this apartment and those private doors too well to be mistaken.»

« To be sure you are, sir; Madam Lechmere had you brought here from the field to her

own house, and one of the best it is in Boston, too; and I expect that madam would somehow lose her title to it, if any thing serious should happen to us?»

« Such as a bayonet, or a troop of horse! but why do you fancy any such thing?»

« Because, sir, when madam comes here of an afternoon, which she did daily, before she sickened, I heard her very often say to herself, if you should be so unfortunate as to die, there would be an end to all her hopes of her house.»

« Then it is Mrs Lechmere who visits me daily,» said Lionel, thoughtfully; « I have recollections of a female form hovering around my bed, though I had supposed it more youthful and active than that of my aunt.»

« And you are quite right, sir, you have had such a nurse the whole time as is seldom to be met with. For making a posset or a gruel, I'll match her with the oldest woman in the wards of Guy's; and, to my taste, the best bar-keeper at the Lon'non is a fool to her at a negus.»

« These are high accomplishments, indeed; and who may be their mistress?»

« Miss Agnus, sir; a rare good nurse is Miss Agnus Danforth! though in point of regard to the troops, I shouldn't presume to call her at all distinguishable.»

« Miss Danforth,» repeated Lionel, dropping his expecting eyes in disappointment, from the face of Meriton to the floor—« I hope she has not sustained all this trouble on my account alone. There are women enough in the establishment—one would think such offices might be borne by the domestics—in short, Meriton, was she without an assistant in all these little kindnesses?»

« *I* helped her, you know, sir, all I could; though my neguses never touch the right spot, like Miss Agnus's.»

« One would think, by your account, that I have done little else than guzzle port wine for six months,» said Lionel, pettishly.

« Lord, sir, you wouldn't drink a thimblefull from a glass, often; which I always took for a bad symptom; for I'm certain 'twas no fault of the liquor, if it wasn't drunk.»

« Well, enough of your favourite beverage! I sicken at the name already—but, Meriton,

have not others of my friends called to enquire after my fate?»

« Certainly, sir, the commander-in-chief sends an aid or a servant every day; and Lord Percy left his card more than——»

« Pooh! these are calls of courtesy; but I have relatives in Boston—Miss Dynevor, has she left the town?»

« No, sir,» said the valet, very coolly resuming the duty of arranging the phials on the night-table; « she is not much of a moving body, is that Miss Cecil.»

« She is not ill, I trust?» demanded Lionel.

« Lord, it goes through me, part joy and part fear, to hear you speak again so quick and brisk, sir! No, she isn't downright ailing, but she hasn't the life and knowledge of things, as her cousin, Miss Agnus.»

« Why do you think so, fellow?»

« Because, sir, she is mopy, and don't turn her hand to any of the light lady's work in the family. I have seen her sit in that very chair, where you are now, sir, for hours together, without moving; unless it was some nervous start when you groaned or breathed a little

upward through your honour's nose—I have taken it into my consideration, sir, that she poetizes; at all events, she likes what I call quietude!»

« Indeed!» said Lionel, pursuing the conversation with an interest that would have struck a more observant man as remarkable—« what reason have you for suspecting Miss Dynevor of manufacturing rhymes?»

« Because, sir, she has often a bit of paper in her hand; and I have seen her read the same thing over and over again, till I'm sure she must know it by heart; which your poetizers always do with what they writes.»

« Perhaps it was a letter!» cried Lionel, with a quickness that caused Meriton to drop a phial he was dusting, at the expense of its contents.

« Bless me, Master Lionel, how strong, and like old times you speak!»

« I believe I am amazed to find you know so much of the divine art, Meriton.»

« Practice makes perfect, you know, sir,» said the simpering valet; « I can't say I ever did much in that way, though I wrote some

verses on a pet pig, as died down at Ravenscliffe, the last time we was there; and I got considerable eclat for a few lines on a vase which Lady Bab's woman broke one day in a scuffle, when the foolish creature said as I wanted to kiss her; though all that knows me knows that I needn't break vases to get kisses from the like of her!»

« Very well,» said Lionel; « some day when I am stronger, I may like to be indulged with a perusal—go now, Meriton, to the larder, and look about you; I feel the symptoms of returning health grow strong upon me.»

The gratified valet instantly departed, leaving his master to the musings of his own busy fancy. Several minutes passed away before the young man raised his head from the hand that supported it, and then it was only done when he thought he heard a light footstep near him. His ear had not deceived him, for Cecil Dynevor herself stood within a few feet of the chair, which concealed, in a great measure, his person from her view. It was apparent, by her attitude and her tread, that she expected to find the sick where she had

seen him last, and where, for so many dreary months, his listless form had been stretched in apathy. Lionel followed her graceful movements with his eyes, and as the airy band of her morning cap waved aside at her own breathing, he discovered the unnatural paleness that was seated on her speaking features. But when she drew the folds of the bed curtains, and missed the invalid, thought is not quicker than the motion with which she turned her light person towards the chair. Here she encountered the eyes of the young man, beaming on her with delight, and expressing all that animation and intelligence to which they had so long been strangers. Yielding to the surprise and the gush of her feelings, Cecil flew to his feet, and clasping one of his extended hands in both her own, she cried—

« Lionel, dear Lionel, you are better! God be praised, you look well again!»

Lionel gently extricated his hand from the warm and unguarded pressure of her soft fingers, and drew forth a paper which she had unconsciously committed to his keeping.

« This, dearest Cecil,» he whispered to the

blushing maiden, « this is my own letter, written when I knew my life to be at imminent hazard, and speaking the purest thoughts of my heart—tell me, then, it has not been thus kept for nothing?»

Cecil dropped her face between her hands for a moment, in burning shame, and then, as all the emotions of the moment crowded around her heart, she yielded to them as a woman, and burst into a paroxysm of tears. It is needless to dwell on those consoling and seducing speeches of the young man, which soon succeeded in luring his companion not only from her sobs, but even from her confusion, and permitted her to raise her beautiful countenance to his ardent gaze, bright and confiding as his fondest wishes could have made it.

The letter of Lionel was too direct, not to save her pride, and it had been too often perused for a single sentence to be soon forgotten. Besides, Cecil had watched over his couch too fondly and too long to indulge in any of those little coquetries which are some-

times met with in similar scenes. She said all that an affectionate, generous, and modest female would say on such an occasion; and it is certain, that well as Lionel looked on waking, the little she uttered had the effect to improve his appearance ten-fold.

« And you received my letter on the morning after the battle?» said Lionel, leaning fondly over her, as she still, unconsciously, kneeled by his side.

« Yes—yes—it was your order that it should be sent to me only in case of your death; but for more than a month you were numbered as among the dead by us all.—Oh! what a month was that!»

« 'Tis past, my sweet friend, and God be praised, I may now look forward to health and happiness.»

« God be praised, indeed!» murmured Cecil, the tears again rushing to her eyes—« I would not live that month over again, Lionel, for all that this world can offer!»

« Dearest Cecil,» he replied, « I can only repay this kindness and suffering on my

account, by shielding you from the rude contact of the world, even as your father would protect you were he again in being.»

She looked up in his face with all the soul of a woman's confidence beaming in her eyes, as she answered—

« You will, Lincoln, I know you will, you have sworn it, and I should be a wretch to doubt you.»

He drew her unresisting form into his arms, and folded her to his bosom. In another moment a noise, like one ascending the stairs, was heard through the open door of the room, when all the feelings of her sex rushed to the breast of Cecil. She sprung on her feet, and hardly allowing time to the delighted Lionel to note the burning tints that suffused her whole face, she darted from the room with the rapidity and lightness of an antelope.

CHAPTER VII.

« Dead, for a ducat, dead. »

Hamlet.

WHILE Lionel was in the confusion of feelings produced by the foregoing scene, the intruder, after a prelude of singularly heavy and loud steps, on the floor, as if some one approached on crutches, entered by a door opposite to the one through which Cecil had so suddenly vanished. At the next moment the convalescent was saluted by the full, cheerful voice of his visitor—

« God bless you, Leo ! and bless the whole of us, for we need it, » cried Polwarth, eagerly advancing to grasp the extended hands of his friend. « Meriton has told me that you have got the true marks of health—a good appetite, at last. I should have broken my neck in

hurrying up to wish you joy on the moment, but I just stepped into the kitchen, without Mrs Lechmere's leave, to show her cook how to broil the steak they are warming through for you—a capital thing after a long nap, and full of nutriment—God bless you, my dear Leo! the look of your bright eye is as stimulating to my spirits as West-India pepper is to the stomach.»

Polwarth ceased shaking the hands of his reanimated friend, as with a husky voice he concluded, and turning aside under the pretence of reaching a chair, he dashed his hand before his eyes, gave a loud hem, and took his seat in silence. During the performance of this evolution, Lionel had leisure to observe the altered person of the captain. His form, though still rotund and even corpulent, was much reduced in dimensions, while in the place of one of those lower members with which nature furnishes the human race, he had been compelled to substitute a leg of wood, somewhat inartificially made, and roughly shod with iron. This last sad alteration, in particular, attracted the look of Major Lincoln,

who continued to gaze at it with glistening eyes, for some time after the other had established himself, to his entire satisfaction, in one of the cushioned seats of the apartment.

« I see my frame-work has caught your eye, Leo,» said Polwarth, raising the wooden substitute, with an air of affected indifference, and tapping it lightly with his cane. « 'Tis not as gracefully cut, perhaps, as if it had been turned from the hands of Master Phidias, but, in a place like Boston, it is an invaluable member, inasmuch as it knows neither hunger nor cold!»

« The Americans, then, press the town,» said Lionel, glad to turn the subject, « and maintain the siege with vigour?»

« They have kept us in horrible bodily terror, ever since the shallow waters toward the main-land have been frozen, and opened a path directly into the heart of the place. Their Virginian generalissimo, Washington, appeared a short time after the affair over on the other peninsula, (a cursed business that, Leo!) and with him came all the trimmings of a large army. Since that time they have worn a more

military front, though little else has been done, excepting an occasional skirmish, but cooping us up like so many uneasy pigeons in our cage.»

« And Gage chafes not at the confinement?»

« Gage !—we sent him off like the soups, months ago. No, no—the moment the ministry discovered that we had come to our forks, in good earnest, they chose Black Billy to preside : and now we stand at bay with the rebels, who have already learnt that our leader is not a child at the grand entertainment of war.»

« Yes, seconded by such men as Clinton and Burgoyne, and supported by the flower of our troops, the position can be easily maintained.»

« No position can be easily maintained, Major Lincoln,» said Polwarth, promptly, « in the face of starvation, both internal and external.»

« And is the case so desperate?»

« Of that you shall judge yourself, my friend. When parliament shut the port of Boston, the colonies were filled with grumblers; and now we have opened it, and would be glad to see

their supplies, the devil a craft enters the harbour willingly—ah ! Meriton, you have the steak, I see; put it here, where your master can have it at his elbow, and bring another plate—I breakfasted but indifferently well this morning. So we are thrown completely on our own resources. But the rebels do not let us enjoy even them in peace. This thing is done to a turn—how charmingly the blood follows the knife!—They have gone so far as to equip privateers, who cut off our necessaries, and he is a lucky man who can get a meal like the one before us.»

« I had not thought the power of the Americans could have forced matters to such a pass.»

« What I have mentioned, though of vital importance, is not half. If a man is happy enough to obtain the materials for a good dish —you should have rubbed an onion over these plates, Mr Meriton,—he don't know where he is to find fuel to cook it withal.»

« Looking at the comforts with which I am surrounded, my good friend, I cannot but fancy your imagination heightens the distress.»

« Fancy no such silly thing, for when you get abroad, you will find it but too exact. In the article of food, if we are not reduced, like the men of Jerusalem, to eating one another, we are, half the time, rather worse off, being entirely destitute of wholesome nutriment. Let but an unlucky log float by the town, among the ice, and go forth and witness the struggling and skirmishing between the Yankees and our frozen fingers for its possession, and you will become a believer! 'Twill be lucky if the water-soaked relic of some wharf should escape without a cannonade! I don't tell you these things as a grumbler, Leo; for, thank God! I have only half as many toes as other men to keep warmth in; and as for eating, a little will suffice for me, now my corporeal establishment is so sadly reduced.»

Lionel paused, in melancholy, as his friend attempted to jest at his misfortune, and then, by a very natural transition for a young man in his situation, he proudly exclaimed—

« But we gained the day, Polwarth! and drove the rebels from their entrenchments, like chaff before a whirlwind!»

« Humph !» ejaculated the captain, laying his wooden leg carefully over its more valuable fellow, and regarding it ruefully, while he spoke—« had we made a suitable use of the bounties of nature, and turned their position, instead of running into the jaws of the beast, many might have left the field better supplied with appurtenances than are some among us at present. But Dark William loves a brush, they say, and he enjoyed it, on that occasion, to his heart's content !»

« He must be grateful to Clinton for his timely presence ?»

« Does the devil delight in martyrdom ! The presence of a thousand rebels would have been more welcome, even at that moment; nor has he smiled once on his good-natured assistant, since he thrust himself, in that unwelcome manner, between him and his enemy. We had enough to think of with our dead and wounded, and in maintaining our conquest, or something more than black looks and unkind eyes would have followed the deed.»

« I fear to inquire into the fortunes of the

field, so many names of worth must be numbered in the loss.»

« Twelve or fifteen hundred men are not to be knocked on the head out of such an army, and all the clever fellows escape. Gage, I know, calls the loss something like eleven hundred; but after vapouring so much about the Yankees, their prowess is not to be acknowledged in its bloom at once. A man seldom goes on one leg, but he halts a little at first, as I can say from experience—put down thirteen, Leo, as a medium, and you'll not miscalculate largely—yes, indeed, there were some brave young men amongst them! those rascally light-footed gentry that I gave up so opportunely, were finely peppered—and there were the Fusileers had hardly men enough left to saddle their goat!»[1]

« And the marines! they must have suffered

[1] This regiment, in consequence of some tradition, kept a goat, with gilded horns, as a memorial. Once a-year it celebrated a festival in which the bearded quadruped acted a conspicuous part. In the battle of Bunker-hill, the corps was distinguished alike for its courage and its losses.

heavily; I saw Pitcairn fall before me;» said Lionel, speaking with hesitation; « I greatly fear our old comrade, the grenadier, did not escape with better fortune.»

« Mac!» exclaimed Polwarth, casting a furtive glance at his companion.—« Ay, Mac was not as lucky in that business as he was in Germany—he-em—Mac—had an obstinate way with him, Leo, a damn'd obstinate fellow in all military matters, but as generous a heart and as free in sharing a mess-bill as any man in his majesty's service! I crossed the river in the same boat with him, and he entertained us with his queer thoughts on the art of war. According to Mac's notions of things, the grenadiers were to do all the fighting; a damn'd odd way with him had Mac!»

« There are few of us without peculiarities, and I could wish that none of them were more offensive than the trifling prejudices of poor Dennis M'Fuse.»

« Yes, yes,» added Polwarth, hemming violently, as if determined to clear his throat at every hazard; « he was a little opinionated in trifles, such as a knowledge of war, and mat-

ters of discipline, but in all important things as tractable as a child. He loved his joke, but it was impossible to have a less difficult or a more unpretending palate in one's mess! The greatest evil I can wish him was breath in his body, to live and enjoy in these hard times, when things become excellent by comparison, the sagacious provision which his own ingenuity contrived to secure out of the cupidity of our ancient landlord, Mister Seth Sage.»

« Then that notable scheme did not entirely fall to the ground,» said Lionel, with a feverish desire to change the subject once more. « I had thought the Americans were too vigilant to admit the intercourse.»

« Seth has been too sagacious to permit them to obstruct it. The prices acted like a soporific on his conscience, and, by using your name, I believe, he has formed some friend of sufficient importance amongst the rebels to protect him in his trade. His supplies make their appearance twice a-week, as regularly as the meats follow the soups in a well-ordered banquet.»

« You then can communicate with the coun-

try, and the country with the town! Although Washington may wink at the proceeding, I should fear the scowl of Howe.»

«Why, in order to prevent suspicions of unfair practices, and at the same time to serve the cause of humanity, so the explanation reads, you know, our sapient host has seen fit to employ a fool as his agent in the intercourse. A fellow, as you may remember, of some notoriety; a certain simpleton, who calls himself Job Pray.»

Lionel continued silent for many moments, during which time his recollections began to revive, and his thoughts glanced over the scenes that occurred in the first months of his residence in Boston. It is quite possible that a painful, though still general and indefinite feeling, mingled with his musings, for he evidently strove to expel some such unwelcome intruder, as he resumed the discourse with a strong appearance of forced gaiety.

«Ay, ay, I well remember poor Job—a fellow once seen and known, not easily to be forgotten. He used, of old, to attach himself greatly to my person, but I suppose, like the

rest of the world, I am neglected when in retirement.»

« You do the lad injustice; he not only makes frequent inquiries, after his slovenly manner I acknowledge, concerning your condition, but sometimes he seems better informed in the matter than myself, and can requite my frequent answers to his questions, by imparting, instead of receiving intelligence of your improvement; more especially since the ball has been extracted.»

« That should be very singular, too,» said Lionel, with a still more thoughtful brow.

« Not so very remarkable, Leo, as one would at first imagine,» interrupted his companion — « the lad is not wanting in sagacity, as he manifested by his choice of dishes at our old mess-table—Ah! Leo, Leo, we may see many a discriminating palate, but where shall we go to find another such a friend! one who could eat and joke—drink and quarrel with a man in a breath, like poor Dennis, who is gone from among us for ever! There was a piquancy about poor Mac that acted on the dullness of life like condiments on the natural appetite.»

Meriton, who was diligently brushing his master's coat, an office that he performed daily; though the garment had not been worn in so long a period, stole a glance at the averted eye of the major, and understanding its expression to indicate a determined silence, he ventured to maintain the discourse in his own unworthy person.

« Yes, sir, a nice gentleman was Captain M'Fuse, and one as fought as stoutly for the king as any gentleman in the army, all agrees. It was a thousand pities such a fine figure of a man hadn't a better idea of dress; it isn't all, sir, as is gifted in that way! But every body says he's a detrimental loss, though there's some officers in town who consider so little how to wear their ornaments, that if they were to be shot I am sure no one would miss them.»

« Ah! Meriton,» cried the full-hearted Polwarth, « I see you are a youth of more observation than I had suspected; Mac had all the seeds of a man in him, though some of them might not have come to maturity. There was a flavour in his humour that served as a relish

to every conversation in which he mingled. Did you serve the poor fellow up in handsome style, Meriton, for his last worldly exhibition?»

« Yes, indeed, sir, we gave him as ornamental a funeral as can be seen out of Lon'non. Besides the Royal Irish, all the grenadiers was out; that is, all that wasn't hurt, which was near half of them. As I knowed the regard Master Lionel had for the captain, I dressed him with my own hands; I trimmed his whiskers, sir, and altered his hair more in front, and seeing that his honour was getting a little grey, I threw on a sprinkling of powder, and as handsome a corpse was Captain M'Fuse as any gentleman in the army, let the other be who he may!»

The eyes of Polwarth twinkled, and he blew his nose with a noise not unlike the sound of a clarion ere he rejoined—

« Yes, yes, time and hardships had given a touch of frost to the head of the poor fellow; but it is a consolation to know that he died like a soldier, and not by the hands of that vulgar

butcher, Nature; and that being dead, he was removed according to his deserts!»

«Indeed, sir,» said Meriton, with a solemnity worthy of the occasion, «we gave him a great procession—a great deal can be made out of his majesty's uniform, on such festivities, and it had a wonderful look about it!—Did you speak, sir?»

«Yes,» added Lionel, impatiently, «remove the cloth; and go inquire if there be letters for me.»

The valet submissively obeyed, and, after a short pause, the dialogue was resumed by the gentlemen on subjects of a less painful nature.

As Polwarth was exceedingly communicative, Lionel soon obtained a very general, and to do the captain suitable justice, an extremely impartial account of the situation of the hostile forces, as well as of all the leading events that had transpired since the day of Breeds. Once or twice the invalid ventured an allusion to the spirit of the rebels, and to the unexpected energy they had discovered; but Polwarth heard them all in silence, answering only by a

melancholy smile, and, in the last instance, by a significant gesture towards his unnatural supporter. Of course, after this touching acknowledgment of his former error, his friend waived the subject for others less personal.

He learned that the royal general maintained his hardly-earned conquest on the opposite peninsula, where he was as effectually beleaguered, however, as in the town of Boston itself. In the mean time, while the war was conducted in earnest at the point where it commenced, hostilities had broken out in every one of those colonies south of the St Lawrence and the Great Lakes, where the presence of the royal troops invited an appeal to force. At first, while the colonists acted under the impulses of the high enthusiasm of a sudden rising, they had been every where successful. A general army had been organized, as already related, and divisions were employed, at different points, to effect those conquests, which, in that early state of the struggle, were thought to be important to the main result. But the effects of their imperfect means and divided power were already becoming visible. After

a series of minor victories, Montgomery had fallen in a most desperate but unsuccessful attempt to carry the impregnable fortress of Quebec; and, ceasing to be the assailants, the Americans were gradually compelled to collect their resources, to meet that mighty effort of the crown which was known to be not far distant. As thousands of their fellow-subjects in the mother-country manifested a strong repugnance to the war, the ministry so far submitted to the influence of that free spirit which first took deep root in Britain, as to turn their eyes to those states of Europe who made a trade in human life, in quest of mercenaries to quell the temper of the colonists. In consequence, the fears of the timid amongst the Americans were excited by rumours of the vast hordes of Russians and Germans who were to be poured into their country, with the fell intent to make them slaves. Perhaps no step of their enemies had a greater tendency to render them odious in the eyes of the Americans, than this measure of introducing foreigners to decide a quarrel purely domestic. So long as none but men who had been educated in those

acknowledged principles of justice and law, known to both people, were admitted to the contest, there were visible points common to each, which might render the struggle less fierce, and in time lead to a permanent reconciliation. But they reasoned not inaptly when they asserted that in a contest rendered triumphant by slaves, nothing but abject submission could ensue to the conquered. It was like throwing away the scabbard, and, by abandoning reason, submitting the result to the sword alone. In addition to the estrangement these measures were gradually increasing between the people of the mother-country and the colonies, must be added the change it produced amongst the latter in their habits of regarding the person of their prince.

During the whole of the angry discussion, and the recriminations which preceded the drawing of blood, the colonists had admitted, to the fullest extent, not only in their language, but in their feelings, that fiction of the British law which says, « the king can do no wrong. » Throughout the wide extent of an empire, on which the sun was never known to set, the

English monarch could boast of no subjects more devoted to his family and person, than the men who now stood in arms against what they honestly believed to be the unconstitutional encroachments of his power. Hitherto the whole weight of their resentment had justly fallen on the advisers of the prince, who himself was thought to be ignorant, as he was probably innocent, of the abuses so generally practised in his name. But as the contest thickened, the natural feelings of the man were thought to savour of the political acts he was required to sanction with his name. It was soon whispered amongst those who had the best means of intelligence, that the feelings of the sovereign were deeply interested in the maintenance of what he deemed his prerogative, and the ascendency of that body of the representatives of his empire, which he met in person and influenced by his presence. Ere long this opinion was rumoured abroad, and as the minds of men began to loosen from their ancient attachments and prejudices, they confounded, by a very natural feeling, the head with the members; forgetting that « liberty

and equality» formed no part of the trade of princes. The name of the monarch was daily falling into disrepute; and as the colonial writers ventured to allude more freely to his person and power, the glimmerings of that light were seen, which was a precursor of the rise of « the stars of the west» amongst the national symbols of the earth. Until then, few had thought, and none had ventured to speak openly of independence, though events had been silently preparing the colonists for such a final measure.

Allegiance to the prince was the last and only tie to be severed, for the colonies already governed themselves in all matters, whether of internal or foreign policy, as effectually as any people could, whose right to do so was not generally acknowledged. But as the honest nature of George III. admitted of no disguise, mutual disgust and alienation were the natural consequences of the re-action of sentiment between the prince and his western people. [1]

[1] Note.—The prejudices of the King of England were unavoidable in his insulated situation, but his virtues and

All this, and much more of minute detail, was hastily commented on by Polwarth, who possessed, in the midst of his epicurean propensities, sterling good sense, and great integrity of intention. Lionel was chiefly a listener, nor did he cease the greedy and interesting employment until warned by his weakness, and the stroke of a neighbouring clock, that he was trespassing too far on prudence. His friend then assisted the exhausted invalid to his bed, and after giving him a world of good advice, together with a warm pressure of the hand, he stumped his way out of the room, with a noise that brought, at every tread, an echo from the heart of Major Lincoln.

integrity were exclnsively the property of the man. His speech to our first minister after the peace, cannot be too often recorded. « I was the last man in my kingdom to acknowledge your independence, and I shall be the last to violate it.»

CHAPTER VIII.

«God never meant that man should scale the heavens
By strides of human wisdom.»

COWPER.

A VERY few days of gentle exercise in the bracing air of the season, were sufficient to restore the strength of the invalid, whose wounds had healed while he lay slumbering under the influence of the anodynes prescribed by his leech. Polwarth, in consideration of the dilapidated state of his own limbs, together with the debility of Lionel, had so far braved the ridicule of the army, as to set up one of those comfortable and easy conveyances, which, in the good old times of colonial humility, were known by the quaint and unpretending title of tompungs. To equip this establishment, he had been

compelled to impress one of the fine hunters of his friend. The animal had been taught, by virtue of much training from his groom, aided a little, perhaps, by the low state of the garners of the place, to amble through the snow as quietly as if he were conscious of the altered condition of his master's health. In this safe vehicle the two gentlemen might be seen daily gliding along the upper streets of the town, and moving through the winding paths of the common, receiving the congratulations of their friends; or, in their turn, visiting others, who, like themselves, had been wounded in the murderous battle of the preceding summer, but who, less fortunate than they, were still compelled to submit to the lingering confinement of their quarters.

It was not difficult to persuade Cecil and Agnes to join in many of their short excursions, though no temptation could induce the latter to still the frown that habitually settled on her beautiful brow, whenever chance or intention brought them in contact with any of the gentlemen of the army. Miss Dynevor

was, however, much more conciliating in her deportment, and even at times so gracious as to incur the private reproaches of her friend.

« Surely, Cecil, you forget how much our poor countrymen are suffering in their miserable lodgings without the town, or you would be less prodigal of your condescension to these butterflies of the army,» cried Agnes, pettishly, while they were uncloaking after one of these rides, during which the latter thought her cousin had lost sight of that tacit compact by which most of the women of the colonies deemed themselves bound to exhibit their feminine resentments to their invaders—« were a chief from our own army presented to you, he could not have been received in a sweeter manner than you bestowed your smile to-day on that Sir Digby Dent!»

« I can say nothing in favour of its sweetness, my acid cousin, but *that* Sir Digby Dent is a gentleman.»

« A gentleman! yes—so is every Englishman who wears a scarlet coat, and knows how to play off his airs in the colonies!»

« And as I hope I have some claims to be

called a lady,» continued Cecil, quietly, « I do not know why, in the little intercourse we have, I should be rude to him.»

« Cecil Dynevor!» exclaimed Agnes, with a sparkling eye, and with a woman's intuitive perception of the other's motives, « all Englishmen are not Lionel Lincolns.»

« Nor is Major Lincoln an Englishman,» returned Cecil, laughing, while she blushed; « though I have reason to think that Captain Polwarth may be.»

« Silly, child, silly; the poor man has paid the penalty of his offence, and is to be regarded with pity.»

« Have a care, my coz.—Pity is one of a large connexion of gentle feelings; when you once admit the first-born, you may leave open your doors to the whole family.»

« Now that is exactly the point in question, Cecil; because you esteem Major Lincoln, you are willing to admire Howe and all his myrmidons; but I can pity, and still be firm.»

« *Le bon temps viendra.*»

« Never!» interrupted Agnes, with a warmth that prevented her perceiving how much she

admitted—« Never! at least under the guise of a scarlet coat.»

Cecil smiled, but having completed her toilet, she withdrew without making any reply.

Such little discussions, enlivened more or less by the peculiar spirit of Agnes, were of frequent occurrence, though the eye of her cousin became daily more thoughtful, and the indifference with which she listened, was more apparent in each succeeding dialogue.

In the mean time, the affairs of the siege, though conducted with extreme caution, amounted only to a vigilant blockade.

The Americans lay by thousands in the surrounding villages, or were hutted in strong bands nigh the batteries which commanded the approaches to the place. Notwithstanding their means had been greatly increased, by the capture of several vessels loaded with warlike stores, as well as by the reduction of two important fortresses towards the Canadian frontiers, they were still too scanty to admit of that wasteful expenditure which is the usual accompaniment of war. In addition to their necessities, as a reason for forbear-

ance, might also be mentioned the feelings of the colonists, who were anxious, in mercy to themselves, to regain their town as little injured as possible. On the other hand, the impression made by the battle of Bunker-hill was still so vivid as to curb the enterprise of the royal commanders, and Washington had been permitted to hold their powerful forces in check, by an untrained and half-armed multitude, that was, at times, absolutely destitute of the means of maintaining even a momentary contest.

As, however, a show of hostilities was maintained, the reports of cannon were frequently heard, and there were days when skirmishes between the advanced parties of the two hosts, brought on more heavy firings, which continued for longer periods. The ears of the ladies had been long accustomed to these rude sounds, and as the trifling loss which followed was altogether confined to the outworks, they were listened to but with little or no terror.

In this manner a fortnight flew swiftly away, without an incident to be related. One fine

morning, at the end of that period, Polwarth drove into the little court-yard of Mrs Lechmere's residence, with all those knowing flourishes he could command, and which, in the year 1775, were thought to indicate the greatest familiarity with the properties of a tompung. In another minute his wooden member was heard in the passage, timing his steps as he approached the room where the rest of the party were waiting his appearance. The two cousins stood wrapped in furs, with smiling faces blooming beneath double rows of lace to soften the pictures, while Major Lincoln was in the act of taking his cloak from Meriton, as the door opened for the admission of the captain.

« What, already dished ! » exclaimed the good-natured Polwarth, glancing his eyes from one to the other, « so much the better; punctuality is the true leaven of life, a good watch is as necessary to the guest as the host, and to the host as his cook. Miss Agnes, you are amazingly murderous to-day ! If Howe expects his subalterns to do their duty, he should not suffer you to go at large in his camp. »

The fine eye of Miss Danforth sparkled as he proceeded, but happening to fall on his mutilated person, its expression softened, and she was content with answering, with a smile—

« Let your general look to himself; I seldom go abroad but to espy his weakness!»

The captain gave an expressive shrug of his shoulder, and, turning aside to his friend, said in an under-tone—

« You see how it is, Major Lincoln; ever since I have been compelled to serve myself up, like a turkey from yesterday's dinner, with a single leg, I have not been able to get a sharp reply from the young woman; she has grown an even-tempered, tasteless morsel! and I am like a two-prong fork, only fit for carving! well, I care not how soon they cut me up entirely, since she has lost her piquancy—but shall we to the church?»

Lionel looked a little embarrassed, and fingered a paper he held in his hand, for a moment, before he handed it to the other for his perusal.

« What have we here?» continued Polwarth. 'Two officers, wounded in the late battle,

desire to return thanks for their recovery;' «hum—hum—two?—yourself, and who is the other?»

«I had hoped it would be my old companion and school-fellow.»

«Ha! what, me!» exclaimed the captain, unconsciously elevating his wooden leg, and examining it with a rueful eye, «umph! Leo, do you think a man has a particular reason to be grateful for the loss of a leg?»

«It might have been worse.»

«I don't know,» interrupted Polwarth, a little obstinately; «there would have been more symmetry in it if it had been both.»

«You forget your mother,» continued Lionel, as though the other had not spoken; «I am very sure it will give her heartfelt pleasure.»

Polwarth gave a loud hem, rubbed his hand over his face once or twice, gave another furtive glance at his solitary limb, and then answered, with a little tremour in his voice—

«Yes, yes, I believe you are quite right; a mother can love her child, though he should be chopped into mince-meat! The sex get

that generous feeling after they are turned of forty; it's your young woman that is particular about proportions and correspondents.»

« You consent, then, that Meriton shall hand in the request as it reads?»

Polwarth hesitated a single instant longer, and then, as he remembered his distant mother, for Lionel had touched the right chord, his heart melted within him.

« Certainly, certainly; it might have been worse, as it was with poor Dennis; ay, let it pass for two; it shall go hard but I find a knee to bend on the occasion. Perhaps, Leo, when a certain young lady sees I can have a 'te deum' for my adventure, she may cease to think me such an object of pity as at present?»

Lionel bowed in silence, and the captain, turning to Agnes, conducted her to the sleigh with a particularly lofty air, that he intended should indicate his perfect superiority to the casualties of war. Cecil took the arm of Major Lincoln, and the whole party were soon seated in the vehicle that was in waiting.

Until this day, which was the second Sunday since his re-appearance, and the first on which

the weather permitted him to go abroad, Lionel had no opportunity to observe the altered population of the town. The inhabitants had gradually left the place, some clandestinely, and others under favour of passes from the royal general, until those who remained were actually out-numbered by the army and its dependents. As the party approached the « King's Chapel,» the street was crowded by military men, collected in groups, who indulged in thoughtless merriment, reckless of the wounds their light conversation inflicted on the few townsmen who might be seen moving towards the church, with deportments suited to the solemnity of their purpose, and countenances severely chastened by a remembrance of the day, and its serious duties. Indeed, so completely had Boston lost that distinctive appearance of sobriety, which had ever been the care and pride of its people, in the levity of a garrison, that even the immediate precincts of the temple were not protected from the passing jest or rude mirth of the gay and unreflecting, at an hour when a quiet was wont to settle on the whole province, as deep

as if Nature had ceased her ordinary functions to unite in the worship of man. Lionel observed the change with mortification, nor did it escape his uneasy glances, that his two female companions concealed their faces in their muffs, as if to exclude a view that brought still more painful recollections to minds early trained in the reflecting habits of the country.

When the sleigh drew up before the edifice, a dozen hands were extended to assist the ladies in their short but difficult passage into the heavy portico. Agnes coldly bowed her acknowledgments, observing, with an extremely equivocal smile, to one of the most assiduous of the young men—

« We, who are accustomed to the climate, find no difficulty in walking on ice, though to you foreigners it may seem so hazardous. »— She then bowed, and walked gravely into the bosom of the church, without deigning to bestow another glance to her right hand or her left.

The manner of Cecil, though more chastened and feminine, and consequently more impressive, was equally reserved. Like her

cousin, she proceeded directly to her pew, repulsing the attempts of those who wished to detain her a moment in idle discourse, by a lady-like propriety that checked the advance of all who approached her. In consequence of the rapid movement of their companions, Lionel and Polwarth were left among the crowd of officers who thronged the entrance of the church. The former moved up within the colonnade, and passed from group to group, answering and making the customary inquiries of men engaged in the business of war. Here, three or four veterans were clustered about one of those heavy columns, that were arranged in formidable show on three faces of the building, discussing, with becoming gravity, the political signs of the times, or the military condition of their respective corps. There, three or four unfledged boys, tricked in all the vain emblems of their profession, impeded the entrance of the few women who appeared, under the pretence of admiration for the sex, while they secretly dwelt on the glitter of their own ornaments. Scattered along the whole

extent of the entrance were other little knots; some listening to the idle tale of a professed jester, some abusing the land in which it was their fate to serve, and others recounting the marvels they had witnessed in distant climes, and in scenes of peril which beggared their utmost powers of description.

Among such a collection it was not difficult, however, to find a few whose views were more elevated, and whose deportment might be termed less offensive, either to breeding or principles. With one of the gentlemen of the latter class Lionel was held for some time in discourse, in a distant part of the portico. At length the sounds of the organ were heard issuing from the church, and the gay parties began to separate, like men suddenly reminded why they were collected in that unusual place. The companion of Major Lincoln had left him, and he was himself following along the colonnade, which was now but thinly peopled, when his ear was saluted by a low voice, singing in a sort of nasal chant at his very elbow—

« Wo unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the market!»

Though Lionel had not heard the voice since the echoing cry had issued out of the fatal redoubt, he knew its first tones on the instant. Turning, at this singular denunciation, he beheld Job Pray, erect and immovable as a statue, in one of the niches in front of the building, whence he gave forth his warning voice, like some oracle speaking to its devotees.

« Fellow! will no peril teach you wisdom?» demanded Lionel—« how dare you brave our resentment so wantonly?»

But his questions were unheeded. The young man, whose features looked pale and emaciated, as if he had endured recent bodily disease, whose eye was glazed and vacant, and whose whole appearance was more squalid and miserable than usual, appeared perfectly indifferent to all around him. Without even altering the riveted gaze of his unmeaning eye, he continued—

« Wo unto you! for ye neither go in your-

selves; neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in!»

« Art deaf, fool!» demanded Lionel.

In an instant the eye of the other was turned on his interrogator, and Major Lincoln felt a thrill pass through him, when he met the wild gleam of intelligence that lighted the countenance of the changeling, as he continued in the same ominous tones—

« Whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, thou fool, is in danger of hell-fire.»

For a moment Lionel stood as if spell-bound by the manner of Job, while he uttered this dreadful anathema. But the instant the secret influence ceased, he tapped the lad lightly with his cane, and bid him descend from the niche.

« Job's a prophet,» returned the other, dishonouring his declaration at the same time, by losing the singular air of momentary intelligence, in his usual appearance of mental imbecility—« it's wicked to strike a prophet.

The Jews stoned the prophets, and beat them too.»

« Do then as I bid you—would you stay here to be beaten by the soldiers? Go now away; after service come to me, and I will furnish you with a better coat than the garment you wear.»

« Did you never read the good book,» said Job, « where it tells how you mus'n't take heed for food nor raiment? Nab says when Job dies he'll go to heaven, for he gets nothing to wear, and but little to eat. Kings wear their di'-mond crowns and golden flauntiness; and kings always go to the dark place.»

The lad suddenly ceased, and crouching into the very bottom of his niche, he began to play with his fingers, like an infant amused with the power of exercising its own members. At the same moment Lionel turned from him, attracted by the rattling of side-arms, and the tread of many feet behind him. A large party of officers belonging to the staff of the army had paused to listen to what was passing. Amongst them Lionel recognised, at the first

glance, two of the chieftains, who, a little in advance of their attendants, were keenly eyeing the singular being that was squatted in the niche. Notwithstanding his surprise, Major Lincoln detected the scowl that impended over the dark brow of the commander-in-chief, while he bowed low, in deference to his rank.

« Who is this fellow, that dare condemn the mighty of the earth to such sweeping perdition?» demanded Howe; « his own sovereign amongst the number!»

« 'Tis an unfortunate being, wanting intellect, with whom accident has made me acquainted,» returned Major Lincoln; « who hardly knows what he utters, and, least of all, in whose presence he has been speaking.»

« It is to such idle opinions, which are conceived by the designing, and circulated by the ignorant, that we may ascribe the wavering allegiance of the colonies,» said the British general. « I hope you can answer for the loyalty of your singular acquaintance, Major Lincoln?»

Lionel was about to reply with some little spirit, when the companion of the frowning chief suddenly exclaimed—

« By the feats of the feathered Hermes, but this is the identical Merry Andrew who took the flying leap from Copp's, of which I have already spoken to you.—Am I in error, Lincoln? Is not this the shouting philosopher, whose feelings were so elevated on the day of Breeds, that he could not refrain from flying, but who, less fortunate than Icarus, made his descent on terra firma?»

« I believe your memory is faithful, sir,» said Lionel, answering the smile of the other —« the lad is often brought to trouble by his simplicity?»

Burgoyne gave a gentle impulse to the arm he held, as if he thought the wretched being before them unworthy of further consideration; though secretly with a view to prevent an impolitic exhibition of the well known propensity of his senior to push his notions of military ascendency to the extreme. Perceiving, by the still darkening look of the

other, that he hesitated, his ready lieutenant observed—

« Poor fellow! his treason was doubly punished, by a flight of some fifty feet down the declivity of Copp's, and the mortification of witnessing the glorious triumph of his majesty's troops. To such a wretch we may well afford forgiveness.»

Howe insensibly yielded to the continued pressure of the other, and his hard features even relaxed into a scowling smile, as he said, while turning away—

« Look to your acquaintance, Major Lincoln, or bad as his present condition seems, he may make it worse. Such language cannot be tolerated in a place besieged. That is the word, I believe—the rebels call the mob a besieging army, do they not?»

« They do gather round our winter-quarters, and claim some such distinction.»

« It must be acknowledged they did well on Breeds too! The shabby rascals fought like true men.»

« Desperately, and with some discretion,»

answered Burgoyne; « but it was their fortune to meet those who fought better, and with greater skill—shall we enter?»

The frown was now entirely chased from the brow of the chief, who said complacently—

« Come, gentlemen, we are tardy; unless more industrious we shall not be in season to pray for the king, much less ourselves.»

The whole party advanced a step, when a bustle in the rear announced the approach of another officer of high rank, and the second in command entered into the colonnade, followed also by the gentlemen of his family. The instant he appeared, the self-contented look vanished from the features of Howe, who returned his salute with cold civility, and immediately entered the church. The quick-witted Burgoyne again interposed, and, as he made way in his turn, he found means to whisper into the ears of Clinton some well-imagined allusion to the events of that very field which had given birth to the heart-burnings between his brother generals, and had caused the feelings of Howe to be estranged

from the man to whose assistance he owed so much. Clinton yielded to the subtle influence of the flattery, and followed his commander into the house of God, with a bland contentment that he probably mistook for a feeling much better suited to the place and the occasion. As the whole group of spectators, consisting of aids, secretaries, and idlers, without, immediately imitated the example of the generals, Lionel found himself alone with the changeling.

From the moment that Job discovered the vicinity of the English leader, to that of his disappearance, the lad remained literally immovable. His eye was fastened on vacancy, his jaw had fallen in a manner to give a look of utter mental alienation to his countenance; and in short, he exhibited the degraded lineaments and figure of a man, without his animation or intelligence. But as the last footsteps of the retiring party became inaudible, the fear which had put to flight the feeble intellects of the simpleton, slowly left him, and raising his face, he said, in a low, growling voice—

« Let him go out to Prospect; the people will teach him the law!»

« Perverse and obstinate simpleton!» cried Lionel, dragging him, without further ceremony, from the niche—« will you persevere in that foolish cry until you are whipped from regiment to regiment for your pains!»

« You promised Job the grannies shouldn't beat him any more, and Job promised to run your ar'n'ds.»

« Ay! but unless you learn to keep silence, boy, I shall forget my promise, and give you up to the anger of all the grannies in town.»

« Well,» said Job, brightening in his look, like a fool in his exultation, « they are half of them dead, at any rate; Job heard the biggest man among 'em roar like a ravenous lion, 'hurrah for the Royal Irish!' but he never spoke ag'in; though there wasn't any better rest for Job's gun than a dead man's shoulder!»

« Wretch!» cried Lionel, recoiling from him in horror, « are your hands then stained with the blood of M'Fuse?»

« Job didn't touch him with his hands,»

returned the undisturbed simpleton—« for he died like a dog, where he fell!»

Lionel stood a moment in utter confusion of thought; but hearing the infallible evidence of the near approach of Polwarth in his tread, he said, in a hurried manner, and in a voice half choked by his emotions—

« Go, fellow, go to Mrs Lechmere's as I bid you, tell—tell Meriton to look to my fire.»

The lad made a motion towards obeying, but, checking himself, he looked up into the face of the other with a piteous and suffering look, and said—

« See Job's numb with cold! Nab and Job can't get wood now; the king keeps men to fight for it; let Job warm his flesh a little; his body is cold as the dead!»

Touched to the heart by the request, and the helpless aspect of the lad, Lionel made a silent signal of assent, and turned quickly to meet his friend. It was not necessary for Polwarth to speak, in order to apprise Major Lincoln that he had overheard part of the dialogue between him and Job; his countenance and attitude sufficiently betrayed his

knowledge, as well as the effect it had produced on his feelings. He kept his eyes on the form of the simpleton, as the lad shuffled his way along the icy street, with an expression that could not easily be mistaken.

« Did I not hear the name of poor Dennis?» at length he asked.

« 'Twas some of the idle boasting of the fool. But why are you not in the pew?»

« The fellow is a *protégé* of yours, Major Lincoln; but you may carry forbearance too far,» returned Polwarth, gravely, « I come for you, at the request of a pair of beautiful blue eyes, that have enquired of each one that has entered the church, this half-hour, where and why Major Lincoln has tarried.»

Lionel bowed his thanks, and affected to laugh at the humour of his friend, while they proceeded together to the pew of Mrs Lechmere without further delay.

The painful reflection excited by this interview with Job, gradually vanished from the mind of Lionel, as he yielded to the influence of the solemn service of the church. He heard the difficult and suppressed breathing of the

fair being who kneeled by his side, while the minister read those thanksgivings which personally concerned himself, and no little of earthly gratitude mingled with the loftier aspirations of the youth, as he listened. He caught the timid glance of the soft eye from behind the folds of Cecil's veil, as they rose, and he took his seat as happy as an ardent young man might well be fancied, under the consciousness of possessing the best affections of a female so youthful, so lovely, and so pure.

Perhaps the service was not altogether so consoling to the feelings of Polwarth. As he recovered his solitary foot again, with some little difficulty, he cast a very equivocal glance at his dismembered person, hemmed aloud, and finished with a rattling of his wooden-leg about the pew, that attracted the eyes of the whole congregation, as if he intended the ears of all present should bear testimony in whose behalf their owners had uttered their extraordinary thanksgivings.

The officiating minister was far too discreet to vex the attention of his superiors with any prolix and unwelcome exhibitions of the Chris-

tian's duty. The impressive delivery of his text required one minute. Four were consumed in the exordium. The argument was ingeniously condensed into ten more; and the peroration of his essay was happily concluded in four minutes and a half; leaving him the satisfaction of knowing, as he was assured by fifty watches, and twice that number of contented faces, that he had accomplished his task by half a minute within the orthodox period.

For this exactitude he doubtless had his reward. Among other testimonials in his favour, when Polwarth shook his hand to thank him for his kind offices in his own behalf, he found room for a high compliment to the discourse, concluding by assuring the flattered divine, « that in addition to its other great merits, it was done in beautiful time! »

CHAPTER IX.

« Away; let naught to love displeasing,
My Winifreda, move your care:
Let naught delay the heavenly blessing,
Nor squeamish pride, nor gloomy fears. »

Anonymous.

It was perhaps fortunate for the tranquillity of all concerned, that during this period of their opening confidence, the person of Mrs Lechmere came not between the bright image of purity and happiness that Cecil presented in each lineament and action, and the eyes of her lover. The singular, and somewhat contradictory interests that lady had so often betrayed in the movements of her young kinsman, were no longer visible to awaken his slumbering suspicions. Even those inexpli-

cable scenes in which his aunt had so strangely been an actor, were forgotten in the engrossing feelings of the hour; or, if remembered at all, were only suffered to dim the pleasing pictures of his imagination, as an airy cloud throws its passing shadows across some cheerful and lovely landscape. In addition to those very natural auxiliaries, love and hope, the cause of Mrs Lechmere had found a very powerful assistant in the bosom of Lionel, through an accident which had confined her for a long period, not only to her apartment, but to her bed.

On that day, when the critical operation was performed on the person of Major Lincoln, his aunt was known to have awaited the result in intense anxiety. As soon as the favourable termination was reported to her, she hastened towards his room with an unguarded eagerness, which, added to the general infirmities of her years, had nearly cost the price of her life. Her foot became entangled in her train, in ascending the stairs, but disregarding the warning cry of Agnes Danforth, with that sort of reckless vehemence that some-

times broke through the formal decorum of her manners, she sustained, in consequence, a fall that might well have proved fatal to a much younger woman. The injury she received was severe and internal; and the inflammation, though not high, was sufficiently protracted to arouse the apprehensions of her attendants. The symptoms were, however, now abating, and her recovery no longer a matter of question.

As Lionel heard this from the lips of Cecil, the reader will not imagine the effect produced by the interest his aunt took in his welfare was at all lessened by the source whence he derived his knowledge. Notwithstanding Cecil dwelt on such a particular evidence of Mrs Lechmere's attachment to her nephew, with much earnestness, it had not escaped Major Lincoln that her name was but seldom introduced in their frequent conversations, and never, on the part of his companion, without a guarded delicacy that appeared sensitive in the extreme. As their confidence, however, increased with their hourly communications, he began gently to

lift the veil which female reserve had drawn before her inmost feelings, and to read a heart whose purity and truth would have repaid a more difficult investigation.

When the party returned from the church, Cecil and Agnes immediately hastened to the apartment of the invalid, leaving Lionel in possession of the little wainscoted parlour by himself; Polwarth having proceeded to his own quarters, with the assistance of the hunter. The young man passed a few minutes in pacing the room, musing deeply on the scene he had witnessed before the church; now and then casting a vacant look on the fanciful ornaments of the walls, among which the armorial bearings of his own name was so frequent, and in such honourable situations. At length he heard that light footstep approach, whose sound had now become too well known to be mistaken, and in another instant he was joined by Miss Dynevor.

«Mrs Lechmere!» he said, leading her to a settee, and placing himself by her side; «you found her better, I trust?»

«So well that she intends adventuring, this morning, an interview with your own formidable self. Indeed, Lionel, you have every reason to be grateful for the deep interest my grandmother takes in your welfare! Ill as she has been, her inquiries in your behalf were ceaseless; and I have known her refuse to answer any questions about her own critical condition, until her physician had relieved her anxiety concerning yours.»

As Cecil spoke, the tears rushed into her eyes, and her bloom deepened with the strength of her feelings.

«It is to you, then, that much of my gratitude is due,» returned Lionel; «for, by permitting me to blend my lot with yours, I find new value in her eyes. Have you acquainted Mrs Lechmere with the full extent of my presumption? She knows of our engagement?»

«Could I do otherwise? while your life was in peril, I confined the knowledge of my interest in your situation to my own breast; but when we were flattered with the hopes of a recovery, I placed your letter

in the hands of my natural adviser, and have the consolation of knowing that she approves of my—what shall I call it, Lionel—would not folly be the better word?»

« Call it what you will, so you do not disavow it. I have hitherto forborne inquiring into the views of Mrs Lechmere, in tenderness to her situation; but may I flatter myself, Cecil, that she will not reject me?»

For a single instant the blood rushed tumultuously over the fine countenance of Miss Dynevor, suffusing even her temples and forehead with its healthful bloom; but, as she cast a reproachful glance at her lover, it deserted even her cheeks, while she answered calmly, though with a slight exhibition of displeasure in her air—

« It may have been the misfortune of my grandmother to view the head of her own family with too partial eyes; but if it be so, her reward should not be distrust. The weakness is, I dare say, very natural, though not less a weakness.»

For the first time Lionel fully comprehended the cause of that variable manner

with which Cecil had received his attentions, until interest in his person had stilled her sensitive feelings. Without, however, betraying the least consciousness of his intelligence, he answered—

«Gratitude does not deserve so forbidding a name as distrust; nor will vanity permit me to call partiality in my favour a weakness.»

«The word is a good and a safe term, as applied to poor human nature,» said Cecil, smiling once more with all her native sweetness, «and you may possibly overlook it when you recollect that our foibles are sometimes hereditary.»

«I pardon your unkind suspicion for that gentle acknowledgment. But I may now, without hesitation, apply to your grandmother for her consent to our immediate union?»

«You would not have your epithalamium sung, when, at the next moment, you may be required to listen to the dirge of some friend?»

«The very reason you urge against our marriage, induces me to press it, Cecil. As the season advances, this play of war must end. Howe will either break out of his bounds, and

drive the Americans from the hills, or seek some other point for more active warfare. In either case you would be left in a distracted and divided country, at an age too tender for your own safety, rather the guardian than the ward of your helpless parent. Surely, Cecil, you would not hesitate to accept of my protection at such a crisis, I had almost dared to say, in tenderness to yourself, as well as to my feelings!»

«Say on,» she answered; «I admire your argument. In the first place, however, I do not believe your general can drive the Americans from their posts so easily; for, by a very simple process in figures, that even I understand, you may find, if one hill costs so many hundred men, that the purchase of the whole would be too dear—nay, Lionel, do not look so grave, I implore you! Surely, surely, you do not think I would speak idly of a battle that had nearly cost your life, and—and—my happiness.»

«Say on,» said Lionel, instantly dismissing the momentary cloud from his brow, and

smiling fondly in her anxious face; «I admire your casuistry, and worship your feeling; but can also deny your argument.»

Re-assured by his voice and manner, after a moment of extreme agitation, she continued in the same playful tones as before—

«But we will suppose all the hills won, and the American chief, Washington, who, though nothing but a rebel, is a very respectable one, driven into the country, with his army at his heels; I trust it is to be done without the assistance of the women? Or, should Howe remove his force, as you intimate, will he not leave the town behind him? In either case I should remain quietly where I am; safe in a British garrison, or safer among my countrymen.»

«Cecil, you are alike ignorant of the dangers and of the rude lawlessness of war! Though Howe should abandon the place, 'twould be only for a time; believe me, the ministry will never yield the possession of a town like this, which has so long dared their power, to men in arms against their lawful prince.»

«You have strangely forgotten the last six months, Lionel, or you would not accuse me of ignorance of the misery that war can inflict.»

«A thousand thanks for the kind admission, dearest Cecil, as well as for the hint,» said the young man, shifting the ground of his argument with the consistency, as well as the readiness of a lover; «you have owned your sentiments to me, and would not refuse to avow them again?»

«Not to one whose self-esteem will induce him to forget the weakness; but, perhaps, I might hesitate to do such a silly thing before the world.»

«I will then put it to your heart,» he continued, without regarding the smiling coquettry she had affected. «Believing the best, you will admit that another battle would be no strange occurrence?»

She raised her anxious looks to his face, but remained silent.

«We both know—at least I know, from sad experience, that I am far from being invulnerable. Now, answer me, Cecil, not as a female

struggling to support the false pride of her sex, but as a woman, generous and full of heart, like yourself—were the events of the last six months to recur, whether would you live them over, affianced in secret, or as an acknowledged wife, who might not blush to show her tenderness to the world?»

It was not until the large drops that glistened at his words upon the dark lashes of Miss Dynevor, were shaken from the tremulous fringes that concealed her eyes, that she looked, up, blushing into his face, and said,—

«Do you not then think that I endured enough, as one who felt herself betrothed, but that closer ties were necessary to fill the measure of my suffering?»

«I cannot even thank you as I would for those flattering tears, until my question is plainly answered.»

«Is this altogether generous, Lincoln?»

«Perhaps not in appearance, but sincerely so in truth. By Heaven, Cecil, I would shelter and protect you from a rude contact with the world, even as I seek my own happiness!»

Miss Dynevor was not only confused, but

distressed; she, however, said, in a low voice—

«You forget, Major Lincoln, that I have one to consult, without whose approbation I can promise nothing.»

« Will you, then, refer the question to her wisdom? Should Mrs Lechmere approve of our immediate union, may I say to her that you authorize me to ask it?»

Cecil said nothing; but, smiling through her tears, she permitted Lionel to take her hand in a manner that a much less sanguine man would have found no difficulty in construing into an assent.

« Come, then,» he cried; «let us hasten to the apartment of Mrs Lechmere; did you not say she expected me?» She suffered him to draw her arm through his own, and lead her from the room. Notwithstanding the buoyant hopes with which Lionel conducted his companion through the passages of the house, he did not approach the chamber of Mrs Lechmere without some inward repugnance. It was not possible to forget entirely all that had so recently passed, or to still, effectually, those

dark suspicions which had been once awakened within his bosom. His purpose, however, bore him onward, and a glance at the trembling being who now absolutely leaned on him for support, drove every consideration, in which she did not form a most prominent part, from his mind.

The enfeebled appearance of the invalid, with a sudden recollection that she had sustained so much, in consequence of her anxiety in his own behalf, so far aided the cause of his aunt, that the young man not only met her with cordiality, but with a feeling akin to gratitude.

The indisposition of Mrs Lechmere had now continued for several weeks, and her features, aged and sunken as they were by the general decay of nature, afforded strong additional testimony of the severity of her recent illness. Her face, besides being paler and more emaciated than usual, had caught that anxious expression which great and protracted bodily ailing is apt to leave on the human countenance. Her brow was, however, smooth and satisfied, unless at moments,

when a slight and involuntary play of the muscles betrayed that fleeting pains continued, at short intervals, to remind her of her illness. She received her visitors with a smile that was softer and more conciliating than usual, and which the pallid and care-worn appearance of her features rendered deeply impressive.

«It is kind, cousin Lionel,» she said, extending her withered hand to her young kinsman, «in the sick to come thus to visit the well. For after so long apprehending the worst on your account, I cannot consent that my trifling injury should be mentioned before your more serious wounds.»

«Would, madam, that you had as happily recovered from their effects as myself,» returned Lionel, taking her hand and pressing it with great sincerity. «I shall never forget that you owe your illness to anxiety for me.»

«Let it pass, sir; it is natural that we should feel strongly in behalf of those we love. I have lived to see you well again, and, God willing, I shall live to see this wicked rebellion crushed.» She paused; and smiling, for a moment, on the young pair who had ap-

proached her couch, she continued, « Cecil has told me all, Major Lincoln.»

« No, not all, dear madam,» interrupted Lionel; « I have something yet to add; and in the commencement, I will own that I depend altogether on your pity and judgment to support my pretensions.»

« Pretensions is an injudicious word, cousin Lionel; where there is a perfect equality of birth, education, and virtues, and, I may say, considering the difference in the sexes, of fortune too, it may amount to claims; but pretensions is an expression too ambiguous. Cecil, my child, go to my library; in the small, secret drawer of my escritoir, you will find a paper bearing your name; read it, my love, and then bring it hither.»

She motioned to Lionel to be seated, and when the door had closed on the retiring form of Cecil, she resumed the conservation.

« As we are about to speak of business, the confused girl may as well be relieved, Major Lincoln. What is this particular favour that I shall be required to yield?»

« Like any other sturdy mendicant, who

may have already partaken largely of your bounty, I come to beg the immediate gift of the last and greatest boon you can bestow.»

«My grandchild. There is no necessity for useless reserve between us, cousin Lionel, for you will remember I too am a Lincoln. Let us then speak freely, like two friends, who have met to determine on a matter equally near to the heart of each.»

«Such is my earnest wish, madam. I have been urging on Miss Dynevor the peril of the times, and the critical situation of the country, in both of which I have found the strongest reasons for our immediate union.»

«And Cecil?»—

«Has been like herself; kind, but dutiful! She refers me entirely to your decision, by which alone she consents to be guided.»

Mrs Lechmere made no immediate reply, but her features powerfully betrayed the inward workings of her mind. It certainly was not displeasure that caused her to hesitate, her hollow eye lighting with a gleam of satisfaction that could not be mistaken; neither was it uncertainty, for her whole countenance

seemed to express rather the uncontrollable agitation which might accompany the sudden accomplishment of long-desired ends, than any doubt as to their prudence. Gradually her agitation subsided; and as her feelings became more natural, her hard eyes filled with tears, and when she spoke, there was a softness mingled with the tremor of her voice that Lionel had never before witnessed.

«She is a good and a dutiful child, my own, my obedient Cecil! She will bring you no wealth, Major Lincoln, that will be esteemed among your hoards, nor any proud title to add to the lustre of your honourable name; but she will bring you what is as good, if not better; nay, I am sure it must be better; a pure and virtuous heart, that knows no guile!»

«A thousand and a thousand times more estimable in my eyes, my worthy aunt!» cried Lionel, melting before the touch of nature, which had so effectually softened the harsh feelings of Mrs Lechmere: «let her come to my arms pennyless, and without a name; she will be no less my wife, no less her own invaluable self.»

«I spoke only by comparison, Major Lincoln; the child of Colonel Dynevor, and the grand-daughter of the Lord Viscount Cardonnell, can have no cause to blush for her lineage; neither will the descendant of John Lechmere be a dowerless bride! When Cecil shall become Lady Lincoln, she need never wish to conceal the escutcheon of her own ancestors under the bloody hand of her husband's.»

«May Heaven long avert the hour when either of us may be required to use the symbol!» exclaimed Lionel.

«Did I not understand aright! was not your request for an instant marriage?»

«Never less in error, my dear madam; but you surely do not forget that one lives so mutually dear to us, who has every reason to hope for many years of life; and I trust, too, of happiness and reason!»

Mrs Lechmere looked wildly at her nephew, and then passed her hand slowly before her eyes, from whence she did not withdraw them until an universal shudder had shaken the whole of her enfeebled frame.

«You are right, my young cousin,» she said,

smiling faintly—« I believe my bodily weakness has impaired my memory. I was indeed dreaming of days long since past! You stood before me in the image of your desolate father, while Cecil bore that of her mother; my own long-lost, but wilful Agnes! Oh! she was my child, my child, and God has forgotten her faults in mercy to a mother's prayers!»

Lionel recoiled a step before the wild energy of the invalid's manner, in speechless amazement. A flush had passed into her pallid cheeks, and, as he concluded, she clasped her hands before her, and sunk on the pillows which supported her back. Large insulated tears fell from her eyes, and, slowly moving over her wasted cheeks, dropped singly upon the counterpane. Lionel laid his hand upon the night-bell, but an expressive gesture from his aunt prevented his ringing.

« I am well again,» she said — « hand me the restorative by your side.»

Mrs Lechmere drank freely from the glass, and in another minute her agitation subsided, her features settling into their rigid composure, and her eye resuming its hard expression, as

though nothing had occurred to disturb her usual cold and worldly look.

« You see how much better youth can endure the ravages of disease than age, by my present weakness, Major Lincoln,» she continued; « but let us return to other, and more agreeable subjects—you have not only my consent, but my wish that you should wed my grandchild. It is a happiness that I have rather hoped for, than dared to expect, and I will freely add, 'tis a consummation of my wishes that will render the evening of my days not only happy, but blessed!»

«Then, dearest madam, why should it be delayed?—no one can say what a day may bring forth at such a time as this, and the moment of bustle and action is not the hour to register the marriage vows.»

After musing a moment, Mrs Lechmere replied—

«We have a good and holy custom in this religious province, of choosing the day which the Lord has set apart for his own exclusive worship, as that on which to enter into the honourable state of matrimony. Choose, then,

between this or the next Sabbath for your nuptials.»

Whatever might be the ardour of the young man, he was a little surprised at the shortness of the former period; but the pride of his sex would not admit of any hesitation.

« Let it be this day, if Miss Dynevor can be brought freely to consent.»

« Here then she comes, to tell you that, at my request, she does. Cecil, my own sweet child, I have promised Major Lincoln that you will become his wife this day.»

Miss Dynevor, who advanced into the centre of the room, before she heard the purport of this speech, stopped short, and stood like a beautiful statue, expressing astonishment and dismay. Her colour went and came with alarming quickness, and the paper fell from her trembling hands to her feet, which appeared riveted to the floor.

« To-day!» she repeated, in a voice barely audible—« did you say to-day, my grandmother?»

« Even to-day, my child.»

« Why this reluctance, this alarm, Cecil?»

said Lionel, approaching, and leading her gently to a seat. You know the peril of the times—you have condescended to own your sentiments—consider; the winter is breaking, and the first thaw can lead to events which may entirely alter our situation.»

«All these may have weight in your eyes, Major Lincoln,» interrupted Mrs Lechmere, in a voice whose marked solemnity drew the attention of her hearers; «but I have other and deeper motives. Have I not already proved the dangers and the evils of delay! Ye are young, and ye are virtuous; why should ye not be happy? Cecil, if you love and revere me, as I think you do, you will become his wife this day.»

«Let me have time to think, dearest grandmother. The tie is so new and so solemn! Major Lincoln—dear Lionel, you are not wont to be ungenerous; I throw myself on your kindness!»

Lionel did not speak, and Mrs Lechmere calmly answered—

«'Tis not at his, but at my request that you will comply.»

Miss Dynevor rose from her seat by the side of Lionel, with an air of offended delicacy, and said, with a mournful smile to her lover—

«Illness has rendered my good mother timid and weak—will you excuse my desire to be alone with her?»

«I leave you, Cecil,» he said, «but if you ascribe my silence to any other motive than tenderness to your feelings, you are unjust both to yourself and me.»

She expressed her gratitude only in her looks, and he immediately withdrew, to await the result of their conversation in his own apartment. The half-hour that Lionel passed in his chamber seemed half a-year, but at the expiration of that short period of time, Meriton came to announce that Mrs Lechmere desired his presence again in her room.

The first glance of her eye assured Major Lincoln that his cause had triumphed. His aunt had sunk back on her pillows, with her countenance set in a calculating and rigid expression, which indicated a satisfaction so selfish that it almost induced the young man to regret she had not failed. But when his

eyes met the tearful and timid glances of the blushing Cecil, he felt, that provided she could not be his without violence to her feelings, he cared but little at whose instigation she had consented.

« If I am to read my fate by your goodness, I know I may hope,» he said, advancing to her side—« if in my own deserts, I am left to despair.»

« Perhaps 'twas foolish, Lincoln,» she said, smiling through her tears, and frankly placing her hand in his, « to hesitate about a few days, when I feel ready to devote my life to your happiness. It is the wish of my grandmother that I place myself under your protection.»

« Then this evening unites us for ever?»

« There is no obligation on your gallantry that it should positively take place this very evening, if any, or the least difficulties present.»

« But none do nor can,» interrupted Lionel. « Happily the marriage forms of the colony are simple, and we enjoy the consent of all who have any right to interfere.»

« Go, then, my children, and complete your

brief arrangements,» said Mrs Lechmere; « 'tis a solemn knot that ye tie! it must, it will be happy!»

Lionel pressed the hand of his intended bride, and withdrew, and Cecil, throwing herself into the arms of her grandmother, gave vent to her feelings in a burst of tears. Mrs Lechmere did not repulse her child; on the contrary, she pressed her once or twice to her heart, but still an observant spectator might have seen that her looks betrayed more of worldly pride, than of those natural emotions which such a scene ought to have excited.

CHAPTER X.

«Come, Friar Francis, be brief; only to the plain form of marriage.»

Much Ado about Nothing.

MAJOR LINCOLN had justly said the laws regulating marriages in the Massachusets, which were adapted to the infant state of the country, threw but few impediments in the way of the indissoluble connexion. Cecil had, however, been educated in the bosom of the English church, and she clung to its forms and ceremonies with an affection that may easily be accounted for in their solemnity and beauty. Notwithstanding the colonists often chose the weekly festival for their bridals, the rage of reform had excluded the altar from most of their temples, and it was not usual with them to celebrate their nuptials in the places of public worship. But there appeared so much of

unreasonable haste, and so little of due preparation in her own case, that Miss Dynevor, anxious to give all solemnity to an act to whose importance she was sensibly alive, expressed her desire to pronounce her vows at that altar where she had so long been used to worship, and under that roof where she had already, since the rising of the sun, poured out the thanksgivings of her pure spirit in behalf of the man who was so soon to become her husband.

As Mrs Lechmere had declared that the agitation of the day, and her feeble condition must unavoidably prevent her witnessing the ceremony, there existed no sufficient reason for not indulging the request of her grandchild, notwithstanding it was not in strict accordance with the customs of the place. But being married at the altar, and being married in public, were not similar duties, and in order to effect the one and avoid the other, it was necessary to postpone the ceremony until a late hour, and to clothe the whole in a cloak of mystery, that the otherwise unembarrassed state of the parties would not have required.

Miss Dynevor made no other confidant than

her cousin. Her feelings being altogether elevated above the ordinarily idle considerations which are induced by time and preparations on such an occasion, her brief arrangements were soon ended, and she awaited the appointed moment without alarm, if not without emotion.

Lionel had much to perform. He knew that the least intimation of such a scene would collect a curious and a disagreeable crowd around and in the church, and he therefore determined that his plans should be arranged in silence, and managed secretly. In order to prevent a surprise, Meriton was sent to the clergyman, requesting him to appoint an hour in the evening when he could give an interview to Major Lincoln. He was answered, that at any moment after nine o'clock Dr Liturgy would be released from the duties of the day, and in readiness to receive him. There was no alternative; and ten was the time mentioned to Cecil when she was requested to meet him before the altar. Major Lincoln distrusted a little the discretion of Polwarth, and he contented himself with merely telling his friend

that he was to be married that evening, and that he must be careful to repair to Tremont-street in order to give away the bride; appointing an hour sufficiently early for all the subsequent movements. His groom and his valet had their respective and separate orders, and long before the important moment he had every thing arranged, as he believed, beyond the possibility of a disappointment.

Perhaps there was something a little romantic, if not diseased in the mind of Lionel, that caused him to derive a secret pleasure from the hidden movements he contemplated. He was certainly not entirely free from a touch of that melancholy and morbid humour which has been mentioned as the characteristic of his race, nor did he always feel the less happy because he was a little miserable. However, either by his activity of intellect, or that excellent training in life he had undergone, by being required to act early for himself, he had so far succeeded in quelling the evil spirit within him, as to render its influence quite imperceptible to others, and nearly so to himself. It had, in fine, left him what we have en-

deavoured to represent him in these pages, not a man without faults, but certainly one of many high and generous virtues.

As the day drew to a close, the small family-party in Tremont-street collected in their usual manner to partake of the evening repast, which was common throughout the colonies at that period. Cecil was pale, and at times a slight tremor was perceptible in the little hand which did the offices of the table; but there was a forced calmness seated in her humid eyes that betokened the resolution she had summoned to her assistance, in order to comply with the wishes of her grandmother. Agnes Danforth was silent and observant, though an occasional look, of more than usual meaning, betrayed what she thought of the mystery and suddenness of the approaching nuptials. It would seem, however, that the importance of the step she was about to take, had served to raise the bride above the little affectations of her sex; for she spoke of the preparations like one who owned her interest in their completion, and who even dreaded that something might yet occur to mar them.

« If I were superstitious, and had faith in omens, Lincoln,» she said, « the hour and the weather might well intimidate me from taking this step. See, the wind already blows across the endless wastes of the ocean, and the snow is driving through the streets in whirlwinds!»

« It is not yet too late to countermand my orders, Cecil,» he said, regarding her anxiously; « I have made all my movements so like a great commander, that it is as easy to retrograde as to advance.»

« Would you then retreat before one so little formidable as I?» she returned, smiling.

« You surely understand me as wishing only to change the place of our marriage. I dread exposing you and our kind cousin to the tempest, which, as you say, after sweeping over the ocean so long, appears rejoiced to find land on which to expend its fury.»

« I have not misconstrued your meaning, Lionel, nor must you be mistaken in mine. I will become your wife to-night, and cheerfully too; for what reason can I have to doubt you now, more than formerly! But my vows must be offered at the altar.»

Agnes perceiving that her cousin spoke with a suppressed emotion that made utterance difficult, gaily interrupted her—

« And as for the snow, you know little of Boston girls, if you think an icicle has any terrors for them. I vow, Cecil, I do think you and I have been guilty, when children, of coasting in a hand-sled, down the side of Beacon, in a worse flurry than this.»

« We were guilty of many mad and silly things at ten, that might not grace twenty, Agnes.»

« Lord, how like a matron she speaks already!» interrupted the other, throwing up her eyes and clasping her hands in affected admiration; « nothing short of the church will satisfy so discreet a dame, Major Lincoln; so dismiss your cares on her account, and begin to enumerate the cloaks and over-coats necessary to your own preservation.»

Lionel made a lively reply, when a dialogue of some spirit ensued between him and Agnes, to which even Cecil listened with a beguiled ear. When the evening had advanced, Polwarth made his appearance, suitably attired,

and with a face that was sufficiently knowing and important for the occasion. The presence of the captain reminded Lionel of the lateness of the hour, and, without delay, he hastened to communicate his plans to his friend.

At a few minutes before ten, Polwarth was to accompany the ladies in a covered sleigh to the chapel, which was not a stone's throw from their residence, where the bridegroom was to be in readiness to receive them, with the divine. Referring the captain to Meriton for further instructions, and without waiting to hear the other express his amazement at the singularity of the plan, Major Lincoln said a few words of tender encouragement to Cecil, looked at his watch, and, throwing his cloak around him, took his hat, and departed.

We shall leave Polwarth endeavouring to extract the meaning of all these mysterious movements, from the wilful and amused Agnes (Cecil having retired also), and accompany the bridegroom in his progress towards the residence of the divine.

Major Lincoln found the streets entirely deserted. The night was not dark, for a full

moon was wading among the volumes of clouds, which drove before the tempest in dark and threatening masses that contrasted singularly and wildly to the light covering of the hills and buildings of the town. Occasionally the gusts of the wind would lift eddying wreaths of fine snow from some roof, and whole squares were wrapped in mist as the frozen vapour whistled by. At times, the gale howled among the chimneys and turrets, in a steady, sullen roaring, and there were again moments when the element appeared hushed, as if its fury were expended, and winter, having worked its might, was yielding to the steady, but insensible advances of spring. There was something in the season and the hour peculiarly in consonance with the excited temperament of the young bridegroom. Even the solitude of the streets, and the hollow rushing of the winds, the fleeting and dim light of the moon, which afforded passing glimpses of surrounding objects, and then was hid behind a dark veil of shifting vapour, contributed to his pleasure. He made his way through the snow, with that species of stern joy, to

which all are indebted, at times, for moments of wild and pleasing self-abandonment. His thoughts vacillated between the purpose of the hour, and the unlooked for coincidence of circumstances that had clothed it in a dress of such romantic mystery. Once or twice a painful and dark thought, connected with the secret of Mrs Lechmere's life, found its way among his more pleasing visions, but it was quickly chased from his mind by the image of her who awaited his movements in such confiding faith, and with such secure and dependent affection.

As the residence of Dr Liturgy was on the North-end, which was then one of the fashionable quarters of the town, the distance required that Lionel should be diligent, in order to be punctual to his appointment. Young, active, and full of hope, he passed along the unequal pavements with great rapidity, and had the satisfaction of perceiving by his watch, when admitted to the presence of the clergyman, that his speed had even outstripped the proverbial fleetness of time itself.

The reverend gentleman was in his study,

consoling himself for the arduous duties of the day, with the comforts of a large easy-chair, a warm fire, and a pitcher filled with a mixture of cider and ginger, together with other articles that would have done credit to the knowledge of Polwarth in spices. His full and decorous wig was replaced by a velvet cap, his shoes were unbuckled, and his heels released from confinement. In short, all his arrangements were those of a man who, having endured a day of labour, was resolved to prove the enjoyments of an evening of rest. His pipe, though filled, and on the little table by his side, was not lighted, in compliment to the guest he expected at that hour. As he was slightly acquainted with Major Lincoln, no introduction was necessary, and the two gentlemen were soon seated; the one endeavouring to overcome the embarrassment he felt on revealing his singular errand, and the other waiting, in no little curiosity, to learn the reason why a member of parliament, and the heir of ten thousand a-year, should come abroad on such an unpropitious night.

At length Lionel succeeded in making the

astonished priest understand his wishes, and paused to hear the expected approbation of his proposals.

Dr Liturgy had listened with the most profound attention, as if to catch some clue to explain the mystery of the most extraordinary proceeding, and when the young man concluded, he unconsciously lighted his pipe, and began to throw out large clouds of smoke, like a man who felt there was a design to abridge his pleasures, and who was consequently determined to make the most of his time.

« Married ! To be married in church ! and after the night-lecture!» he muttered in a low voice between his long-drawn puffs—« 'tis my duty—certainly—Major Lincoln—to marry my parishioners.»

« In the present instance, as I know my request to be irregular, sir,» interrupted the impatient Lionel, « I will make it your interest also.» While speaking he took a well-filled purse from his pocket, and with an air of much delicacy laid a small pile of gold by the side of the silver spectacle-case of the divine,

as if to show him the difference in the value of the two metals.

Dr Liturgy bowed his acknowledgments, and insensibly changed the stream of smoke to the opposite corner of his mouth, so as to leave the view of the glittering boon unobstructed. At the same time he raised the heel of one shoe, and threw an anxious glance at the curtained window, to inquire into the state of the weather.

« Could not the ceremony be performed at the house of Mrs Lechmere ?» he asked; « Miss Dynevor is a tender child, and I fear the cold air of the chapel might do her no service !»

« It is her wish to go to the altar, and you are sensible it is not my part to question her decision in such a matter.»

« 'Tis a pious inclination; though I trust she knows the distinction between the spiritual and the temporal church. The laws of the colonies are too loose on the subject of marriages, Major Lincoln; culpably and dangerously loose !»

« But, as it is not in our power to alter, my

good sir, will you permit me to profit by them; imperfect as they are?»

« Undeniably—it is part of my office to christen, to marry, and to bury; a duty which I often say covers the beginning, the middle, and the end of existence—but permit me to help you to a little of my beverage, Major Lincoln—we call it 'Samson,' in Boston; you will find the 'Danite' a warm companion for a February night in this climate.»

« The mixture is not inaptly named, sir,» said Lionel, after wetting his lips, « if strength be the quality most considered!»

« Ah! you have him from the lap of a Delilah; but it is unbecoming in one of my cloth to meddle with aught of the harlot.»

He laughed at his own wit, and made a more spirituous than spiritual addition to his own glass, while he continued—

« We divide it into—'Samson with his hair off, and Sampson with his hair on:' and I believe myself the most orthodox in preferring the man of strength, in his native comeliness. I pledge you, Major Lincoln; may the middle of your days be as happy as the charming

young lady you are about to espouse may well render them; and your end, sir, that of a good churchman, and a faithful subject.»

Lionel, who considered this compliment as an indication of his success, now rose, and said a few words on the subject of their meeting in the chapel. The divine, who, manifestly, possessed no great relish for the duty, made sundry slight objections to the whole proceeding, which were, however, soon overcome by the arguments of the bridegroom. At length every difficulty was happily adjusted, save one, and that the epicurean doctor stoutly declared to be a serious objection to acting in the matter. The church fires were suffered to go down, and his sexton had been taken from the chapel that very evening; with every symptom on him of the terrible pestilence which then raged in the place, adding, by its danger, to the horrors and the privations of the siege.

« A clear case of the small-pox, I do assure you, Major Lincoln,» he continued, « and contracted, without doubt, from some emis-

saries sent into the town for that purpose, by the wicked devices of the rebels.»

« I have heard that each party accuses the other of resorting to these unjustifiable means of annoyance,» returned Lionel; « but as I know our own leader to be above such baseness, I will not suspect any other man of it without proof.»

« Too charitable by half, sir; much too charitable! But let the disease come whence it will, I fear my sexton will prove its victim.»

« I will take the charge on myself of having the fires renewed,» said Lionel; « the embers must yet be in the stoves, and we have still an hour of time before us.»

As the clergyman was much too conscientious to retain possession of the gold without fully entitling himself to the ownership, he had long before determined to comply, notwithstanding the secret yearnings of his flesh. Their plans were now soon arranged, and Lionel, after receiving the key of the chapel, took his leave for a time.

When Major Lincoln found himself in the

street again, he walked for some distance in the direction of the chapel, anxiously looking along the deserted way, in order to discover an unemployed soldier, who might serve to perform the menial offices of the absent sexton. He proceeded for some distance without success, for every thing human seemed housed, even the number of lights in the windows beginning to decrease in a manner which denoted that the usual hour of rest had arrived. He had paused in the entrance of the dock-square, uncertain where to apply for an assistant, when he caught a glimpse of the figure of a man, crouching under the walls of the old turretted warehouse, so often mentioned. Without hesitating an instant, he approached the spot, from which the figure neither moved, nor did it indeed betray any other evidence of a consciousness of his proximity. Notwithstanding the dimness of the moon, there was light enough to detect the extreme misery of the object before him. His tattered and thin attire sufficiently bespoke the motive of the stranger for seeking a shelter from the cutting winds behind an angle of the wall, while his

physical wants were betrayed by the eager manner in which he gnawed at a bone, that might well have been rejected from the mess of the meanest private, notwithstanding the extreme scarcity that prevailed in the garrison. Lionel forgot for a moment his present object, at this exhibition of human suffering, and with a kind voice he addressed the wretched being.

»You have a cold spot to eat your supper in, my friend,» he said; « and it would seem, too, but a scanty meal.»

Without ceasing to masticate his miserable nutriment, or even raising his eyes, the other said, in a growling voice—

« The king could shut up the harbour, and keep out the ships; but he hasn't the might to drive cold weather from Boston, in the month of March!»

« As I live, Job Pray! Come with me, boy. and I will give you a better meal, and a warmer place to enjoy it in: but first tell me; can you procure a lantern and a light from your mother?»

« You can't go in the ware'us' to-night,» returned the lad, positively.

« Is there no place at hand, then, where such things might be purchased?»

« They keep them there,» said Job, pointing sullenly to a low building on the opposite side of the square, through one of the windows of which a faint light was glimmering.

« Then take this money and go buy them for me without delay.»

Job hesitated with ill-concealed reluctance.

« Go, fellow, I have instant need of them, and you can keep the change for your reward.»

The young man no longer betrayed any indisposition to go, but answered with great promptitude for one of his imbecile mind—

« Job will go, if you will let him buy Nab some meat with the change?»

« Certainly, buy what you will with it; and furthermore, I promise you that neither your mother nor yourself shall want again for food or clothing.»

« Job's a-hungry,» said the simpleton; « but they say hunger don't come as craving upon a young stomach as upon an old one. Do you think the king knows what it is to be a-cold and hungry?»

« I know not, boy, but I know full well that if one suffering like you were before him, his heart would yearn to relieve him. Go, go, and buy yourself food too, if they have it?»

In a very few minutes Lionel saw the simpleton issuing from the house to which he had run at his bidding, with the desired lantern.

« Did you get any food,» said Lionel, motioning to Job to precede him with the light —« I trust you did not entirely forget yourself in your haste to serve me?»

« Job hopes he didn't catch the pestilence,» returned the lad, eating at the same time voraciously of a small roll of bread.

« Catch what! what is it you hope you did not catch?»

« The pestilence; they are full of the foul disorder in that house.»

« Do you mean the small-pox, boy?»

« Yes; some call it small-pox, and some call it the foul disorder, and other some the pestilence. The king can keep out the trade, but he can't keep out the cold and the pestilence from Boston; but when the people get

the town back, they'll know what to do with it —they'll send it all to the pest-housen.»

« I hope I have not exposed you unwittingly to danger, Job; it would have been better had I gone myself, for I was inoculated for the terrible disease in my infancy.»

Job, who, in expressing his sense of the danger, had exhausted the stores of his feeble mind on the subject, made no reply, but continued walking through the square, until they reached its termination, when he turned, and inquired which way he was to go.

« To the church,» said Lionel, « and swiftly, lad.»

As they entered Corn-hill, they encountered the fury of the wind, when Major Lincoln bowing his head, and gathering his cloak about him, followed the light which flitted along the pavement in his front. Shut out in a manner from the world by this covering, his thoughts returned to their former channel, and in a few moments he forgot where he was, and who he was following. He was soon awakened from his abstraction by perceiving that it was necessary for him to ascend

a few steps, when supposing he had reached the place of destination, he raised his head, and unthinkingly followed his conductor into the tower of a large edifice. Immediately perceiving his mistake, by the difference of the architecture from that of the King's chapel, he reproved the lad for his folly, and demanded why he had brought him thither.

«This is what you call a church,» said Job, «though I call it a meetin'us'—It's no wonder you don't know it—for what the people built for a temple, the king has turned into a stable!»

«A stable!» exclaimed Lionel. Perceiving a strong smell of horses in the place, he advanced, and threw open the inner door, when to his amazement he perceived that he stood in an area fitted for the exercises of the cavalry. There was no mistaking the place, nor its uses. The naked galleries, and many of the original ornaments were standing, but the accommodations below were destroyed, and in their places the floor had been covered with earth, for horses and their riders to practise in the cavesson. The abominations of

the place even now offended his senses as he stood on that spot where he remembered so often to have seen the grave and pious colonists assemble, in crowds, to worship. Seizing the lantern from Job, he hurried out of the building with a disgust that even the unobservant simpleton had no difficulty in discovering. On reaching the street his eyes fell upon the lights, and on the silent dignity of Province-house, and he was compelled to recollect, that this wanton violation of the feelings of the colonists, had been practised directly under the windows of the royal governor.

« Fools, fools ! » he muttered bitterly; « when ye should have struck like men, ye have trifled as children; and ye have forgotten your manhood, and even your God, to indulge your besotten spleen ! »

« And now these very horses are starving for want of hay, as a judgment upon them ! » said Job, who shuffled his way industriously at the other's side. « They had better have gone to meetin' themselves, and heard the expounding, than to set dumb beasts a riot-

ing in a place that the Lord used to visit so often!»

«Tell me, boy, of what other act of folly and madness has the army been guilty?»

«What! haven't you heard of the Old North? They've made oven-wood of the grandest temple in the Bay! If they dared, they'd lay their ungodly hands on old Funnel itself!»

Lionel made no reply. He had heard that the distresses of the garrison, heightened as they were by the ceaseless inactivity of the Americans, had compelled them to convert many houses, as well as the church in question, into fuel. But he saw in the act nothing more than the usual recourse of a common military exigency. It was free from that reckless contempt of a people's feelings, which was exhibited in the prostitution of the ancient walls of the sister edifice, which was known throughout New-England, with a species of veneration, as the «Old South.» He continued his way gloomily along the silent streets, until he reached the more favoured temple, in which the ritual of the English

church was observed, and whose roof was rendered doubly sacred in the eyes of the garrison, by the accidental circumstance of bearing the title of their earthly monarch.

CHAPTER XI.

« Thou art too like the spirit of Banquo: down! »

Macbeth.

Major Lincoln found the King's Chapel differing in every particular from the venerable but prostituted building he had just quitted. As he entered, the light of his lantern played over the rich scarlet covering of many a pew, and glanced upon the glittering ornaments of the polished organ, which now slumbered in as chilled a silence as the dead which lay in such multitudes within and without the massive walls. The laboured columns, with their slender shafts and fretted capitals, threw shapeless shadows across the dim back-ground, peopling the galleries and ceiling with imaginary phantoms of thin air. As this slight delusion passed away, he became sensible of

the change of the temperature. The warmth was not yet dissipated which had been maintained during the different services of the day; for, notwithstanding the wants of the town and garrison, the favoured temple, where the representative of the sovereign was wont to worship, knew not the ordinary privations of the place. Job was directed to supply the dying embers of the stoves with fresh fuel; and as the simpleton well knew where to find the stores of the church, his office was performed with an alacrity that was not a little increased by his own sufferings.

When the bustle of preparation had subsided, Lionel drew a chair from the chancel, while Job crouched by the side of the quivering iron he had heated, in that attitude he was wont to assume, and which so touchingly expressed the secret consciousness he felt of his own inferiority. As the grateful warmth diffused itself over the half-naked frame of the simpleton, his head sunk upon his bosom, and he was fast falling into a slumber, like a worried hound that had at length found ease and shelter. A more active mind would have

wished to learn the reasons that could induce his companion to seek such an asylum at that unseasonable hour. But Job was a stranger to curiosity; nor did the occasional glimmerings of his mind often extend beyond those holy precepts which had been taught him with such care, before disease had sapped its faculties, or those popular principles of the time, that formed so essential a portion of the thoughts of every New-England-man.

Not so with Major Lincoln. His watch told him that many weary minutes must elapse before he could expect to receive his bride, and he disposed himself to wait with as much patience as comported with five-and-twenty, and the circumstances. In a short time the stillness of the chapel was restored, interrupted only by the passing gusts of the wind without, and the dull roaring of the furnace, by whose side Job slumbered in a state of happy oblivion.

Lionel endeavoured to still his truant thoughts, and bring them in training for the solemn ceremony in which he was soon to be an actor. Finding the task too difficult, he

arose, and approaching a window, looked out upon the solitude, and the whirlwinds of snow that drifted through the streets, eagerly listening for those sounds of approach which his reason told him he ought not yet to expect. Again he seated himself, and turned his eyes inquiringly about him, with a sort of inward apprehension that some one lay concealed in the surrounding gloom, with a secret design to mar his approaching happiness. There was so much of wild and feverish romance in the incidents of the day, that he found it difficult at moments to credit their reality, and had recourse to hasty glances at the altar, his attire, and even his insensible companion, to remove the delusion from his mind. Again he looked upward at the unsteady and huge shadows which wavered along the ceiling and the walls, and his former apprehensions of some hidden evil were revived with a vividness that amounted nearly to a presentiment. So uneasy did he become at length, under this impression, that he walked along the more distant aisles, scrupulously looking into the

dark pews, and throwing a scrutinizing glance behind each column, and was rewarded for his trouble, by hearing the hollow echoes of his own footsteps.

In returning from this round he approached the stove, and yielded to a strong desire of listening to the voice of even Job, in a moment of such morbid excitement. Touching the simpleton lightly with his foot, the other awoke with that readiness which denoted the sudden and disturbed nature of his ordinary rest.

« You are unusually dull to-night, Job,» said Lionel, endeavouring to hush his uneasiness in affected pleasantry, « or you would inquire the reason why I pay my visit to the church at this extraordinary hour?»

« Boston folks love their meetin'us's,» returned the obtuse simpleton.

« Ay! but they love their beds, too, fellow; and one-half of them are now enjoying what you seem to covet so much.»

« Job loves to eat, and to be warm!»

« And to sleep too, if one may judge by your drowsiness.»

« Yes, sleep is sweet; Job don't feel a-hungered when he's sleeping.»

Lionel remained silent, for several moments, under a keen perception of the suffering exhibited in the touching helplessness which marked the manner of the other, before he continued—

« But I expect to be joined, soon, by the clergyman, and some ladies, and Captain Polwarth.»

« Job likes Captain Polwarth—he keeps a grand sight of provisions!»

« Enough of this! can you think of nothing but your stomach, boy?»

« God made hunger,» said Job, gloomily, « and he made food too; but the king keeps it all for his rake-hellies!»

« Well, listen, and be attentive to what I tell you.—One of the ladies who will come here, is Miss Dynevor; you know Miss Dynevor, Job? the beautiful Miss Dynevor!»

The charms of Cecil had not, however, made their wonted impression on the dull eye of the idiot, who still regarded the speaker with his customary air of apathy.

« Surely, Job, you know Miss Dynevor!» repeated Lionel, with an irritability that, at any other time, he would have been the first to smile at—« she has often given you money and clothes.»

« Yes; Ma'am Lechmere is her grandam!»

This was certainly one of the least recommendations his mistress possessed, in the eyes of Lionel, who paused a moment, with inward vexation, before he added—

« Let who will be her relatives, she is this night to become my wife. You will remain and witness the ceremony, and then you will extinguish the lights, and return the key of the church to Dr Liturgy. In the morning come to me for your reward.»

The changeling arose, with an air of singular importance, and answered—

« To be sure, Major Lincoln is to be married, and he asks Job to the wedding! Now, Nab may preach her sarmons about pride and flaunty feelings as much as she will; but blood is blood, and flesh is flesh, for all her sayings!»

Struck by the expression of wild meaning

that gleamed in the eyes of the simpleton, Major Lincoln demanded an explanation of his ambiguous language. But ere Job had leisure to reply, though his vacant look again denoted that his thoughts were already contracting themselves within their usually narrow limits, a sudden noise drew the attention of both to the entrance of the chapel. The door opened in the next instant, and the figure of the divine, powdered with drifted snow, and encased in various defences against the cold, was seen moving with a becoming gravity through the principal aisle. Lionel hastened to receive him, and to conduct him to the seat he had just occupied himself.

When Dr Liturgy had uncloaked, and appeared in his robes of office, the benevolence of his smile, and the whole expression of his countenance, denoted that he was satisfied with the condition in which he found the preparations.

« There is no reason why a church should not be as comfortable as a man's library, Major Lincoln,» he said, hitching his seat a little nearer to the stove. « It is a puritanical and

a dissenting idea, that religion has any thing forbidding or gloomy in its nature; and wherefore should we assemble amid pains and inconvenience to discharge its sacred offices.»

«Quite true, sir,» returned Lionel, looking anxiously through one of the windows—«I have not yet heard the hour of ten strike, though my watch tells me it is time!»

«The weather renders the public clocks very irregular. There are so many unavoidable evils to which flesh is heir, that we should endeavour to be happy on all occasions—indeed it is a duty——»

«It 's not in the nature of sin to make fallen man happy,» said a low, growling voice from behind the stove.

«Ha! what! did you speak, Major Lincoln—a very singular sentiment for a bridegroom!» muttered the divine.

«'Tis that weak young man, whom I have brought hither to assist with the fires, repeating some of the lore of his mother; nothing else, sir.»

By this time Dr Liturgy had caught a glimpse of the crouching Job, and compre-

hending the interruption, he fell back in his chair, smiling superciliously, as he continued—

« I know the lad, sir; I should know him. He is learned in the texts, and somewhat given to disputation in matters of religion. 'Tis a pity the little intellect he has had not been better managed in his infancy; but they have helped to crush his feeble mind with their subtilties. We—I mean we of the established church—often style him the Boston Calvin—ha, ha, ha!—Old Cotton was not his equal in subtilty! But speaking of the establishment, do you not fancy that one of the consequences of this rebellion will be to extend its benefits to the colonies, and that we may look forward to the period when the true church shall possess its inheritance in these religious provinces?»

« Oh, most certainly,» said Lionel, again walking anxiously to the window; «would to God they had come!»

The divine, with whom weddings were matters of too frequent occurrence to awaken

his sympathies, understood the impatient bridegroom literally, and replied accordingly.

« I am glad to hear you say it, Major Lincoln, and I hope when the act of amnesty shall be passed, to find your vote on the side of such a condition.»

At this instant Lionel caught a glimpse of the well-known sleigh moving slowly along the deserted street, and uttering a cry of pleasure, he rushed to the door to receive his bride. Dr Liturgy finished his sentence to himself, and rising from his comfortable position, he took the light and entered the chancel. The disposition of the candles having been previously made, when they were lighted, his book opened, his robes adjusted, and his features settled into a suitable degree of solemnity, he stood, waiting with becoming dignity the approach of those over whom he was to pronounce the nuptial benediction. Job placed himself within the shadows of the building, and stood regarding the attitude and imposing aspect of the priest with a species of childish awe.

Then came a group, emerging from the obscurity of the distant part of the church, and moving slowly towards the altar. Cecil was in front, leaning on that arm which Lionel had given her, as much for support, as through courtesy. She had removed her outer and warmer garments in the vestibule of the sacred edifice, and now appeared, attired in a manner as well suited to the suddenness and privacy, as to the importance of the ceremony. A mantle of satin, trimmed with delicate furs, fell carelessly from her shoulders, partly concealing by its folds the exquisite proportions of her slender form. Beneath was a vestment of the same rich material, cut, after the fashions of that period, in a manner to give the exact outlines of the bust. Across the stomacher were deep rows of fine lace, and wide borders of the same valuable texture followed the retiring edges of her robe, leaving the costly dress within partly exposed to the eye. But the beauty and simplicity of her attire (it was simple for that day) was lost, or, rather, it served to adorn, unnoticed, the melancholy beauty of her countenance.

As they approached the expecting priest, Cecil threw, by a gentle movement, her mantle on the rails of the chancel, and accompanied Lionel, with a firmer tread than before, to the foot of the altar. Her cheeks were pale; but it was rather with a compelled resolution than dread, while her eyes were full of tenderness and thought. Of the two devotees of Hymen, she exhibited, if not the most composure, certainly the most singleness of purpose and intentness on the duty before them; for while the looks of Lionel were stealing uneasily about the building, as if he expected some hidden object to start up out of the darkness, hers were rivetted on the priest in sweet and earnest attention.

They paused in their allotted places; and after a moment was allowed for Agnes and Polwarth, who alone followed, to enter the chancel, the low but deep tones of the minister were heard in the solemn stillness of the place.

Dr Liturgy had borrowed a suitable degree of inspiration from the dreariness of the

hour, and the solitude of the building where he was required to discharge his sacred functions. As he delivered the opening exhortation of the service, he made long and frequent pauses between the members of the sentences, giving to each injunction a distinct and impressive emphasis. But when he came to those closing words—

«*If any man can show just cause why they may not be lawfully joined together, let him now speak, or else, hereafter, for ever hold his peace.*»

He lifted his voice, and raised his eyes to the more distant parts of the chapel, as though he addressed a multitude in the gloom. The faces of all present involuntarily followed the direction of his gaze, and a moment of deep expectation, which can only be explained by the singularly wild character of the scene, succeeded the reverberation of his tones. At that moment, when each had taken breath, and all were again turning to the altar, a huge shadow rose upon the gallery, and extending itself along the ceiling, until its gigantic proportions were seen hovering, like an evil spectre, nearly above them.

The clergyman suspended the half-uttered sentence. Cecil grasped the arm of Lionel convulsively, while a shudder passed through her frame, that seemed about to shake it to dissolution.

The shadowy image then slowly withdrew, not without, however, throwing out a fantastic gesture, with an arm which stretched itself across the vaulted roof, and down the walls as if about to clutch its victims beneath.

«*If any man can show just cause why they may not be lawfully joined together, let him now speak, or else, hereafter, for ever hold his peace,*» repeated the priest aloud, as if he would summon the universe at the challenge.

Again the shadow rose, presenting this time the strong and huge lineaments of a human face, which it was not difficult, at such a moment, to fancy possessed even expression and life. Its strongly marked features seemed to work with powerful emotion, and the lips moved as if the airy being was speaking to unearthly ears. Next came two arms, raised above the gazing group, with clasped hands, as in the act of benediction, after which the whole vanished,

leaving the ceiling in its own dull white, and the building still as the graves which surrounded it.

Once more the excited minister uttered the summons; and again every eye was drawn, by a secret impulse, to a spot which seemed to possess the form without the substance of a human being. But the shadow was seen no more. After waiting several moments in vain, Dr Liturgy proceeded with a voice in which a growing tremor was very perceptible, but no further interruption was experienced to the end of the service.

Cecil pronounced her vows, and plighted her troth in tones of holy emotion, while Lionel, who was prepared for some strange calamity, went through the service to the end with a forced calmness. They were married; and when the blessing was uttered, not a sound nor a whisper was heard in the party. Silently they all turned away from the spot, and prepared to leave the place. Cecil stood passively, and permitted Lionel to wrap her form in the folds of her mantle with tender care, and when she would have smiled her thanks for the atten-

tion, she merely raised her anxious eyes to the ceiling, with an expression that could not be mistaken. Even Polwarth was mute; and Agnes forgot to offer those congratulations and good wishes with which her heart had so recently been swelling.

The clergyman muttered a few words of caution to Job concerning the candles and the fire, and hurried after the retiring party with a quickness of step that he was willing to ascribe to the lateness of the hour, and with a total disregard to the safety of the edifice; leaving the chapel to the possession of the ill-gifted, but undisturbed son of Abigail Pray.

CHAPTER XII.

« Forbear to judge, for we are sinners all;
Close up his eyes, and draw the curtain close;
And let us all to meditation. »

King Henry V.

THE bridal party entered their little vehicle, silent and thoughtful: the voice of Polwarth being alone audible as he gave a few low and hurried orders to the groom who was in waiting. Dr Liturgy approached for a moment, and made his compliments, when the sleigh darted away from before the building, as swiftly as if the horse that drew it partook of the secret uneasiness of those it held. The movements of the divine, though less rapid, were equally diligent, and in less than a minute the winds whistled, and clouds of snow were driven through a street, which every

thing possessing life appeared once more to have abandoned.

The instant Polwarth had discharged his load, at the door of Mrs Lechmere, he muttered something of « happiness and to-morrow,» which his friend did not understand, and dashed through the gate of the court-yard, at the same mad rate that he had driven from the church. On entering the house, Agnes repaired to the room of her aunt, to report that the marriage-knot was tied, while Lionel led his silent bride into the empty parlour.

Cecil stood fixed and motionless as a statue, while her husband removed her cloak and mantle ; her cheeks pale, her eyes rivetted on the floor, and her whole attitude and manner exhibiting the intensity of thought which had been created by the scene in which she had just been an actor. When he had relieved her light form from the load of garments in which it had been enveloped by his care, he impelled her gently to a seat by his side, on the settee, and for the first time since she had uttered the final vow at the altar, she spoke—

« Was it a fearful omen !» she whispered, as

he folded her to his heart, « or was it no more than a horrid fancy !»

« 'Twas nothing, love—'twas a shadow—that of Job Pray, who was with me to light the fires.»

« No—no—no,» said Cecil, speaking with the rapidity of high excitement, and in tones that gathered strength as she proceeded—« Those were never the unmeaning features of the miserable simpleton ! Know you, Lincoln, that in the haughty, the terrific outlines of those dreadful lineaments on the wall, I fancied a resemblance to the profile of our great uncle, your father's predecessor in the title—Dark Sir Lionel, as he was called !»

« It was easy to fancy any thing, at such a time, and under such circumstances. Do not cloud the happiness of our brida by these gloomy fancies?»

« Am I gloomy or superstitious by habit, Lionel?» she asked, with a deprecating tenderness in her voice, that touched his inmost heart—« but it came at such a moment, and in such a shape, that I should be more than woman not to tremble at its terrible import !»

« What is it you dread, Cecil? Are we not married; lawfully, solemnly united?» the bride shuddered; but perceiving her unwilling, or unable to answer, he continued—« beyond the power of man to sever; and with the consent, nay, by the earnest wish, the command of the only being who can have a right to express a wish, or have an opinion on the subject?»

« I believe—that is, I think, it is all as you say, Lionel,» returned Cecil, still looking about her with a vacant and distressed air that curdled his blood; « yes—yes, we are certainly married; and oh! how ardently do I implore Him who sees and governs all things, that our union may be blessed! but——»

« But what, Cecil? will you let a thing of naught—a shadow affect you in this manner?»

« 'Twas a shadow, as you say, Lincoln; but where was the substance!»

« Cecil, my sensible, my good, my pious Cecil, why do your faculties slumber in this unaccountable apathy! Ask your own excellent reason: can there be a shade where nothing obstructs the light?»

« I know not. I cannot reason—I have not

reason. All things are possible to Him whose will is law, and whose slightest wish shakes the universe. There was a shadow, a dark, a speaking, and a terrible shadow; but who can say where was the reality?»

«I had almost answered, with the phantom, only in your own sensitive imagination, love. But arouse your slumbering powers, Cecil, and reflect how possible it was for some curious idler of the garrison to have watched my movements, and to have secreted himself in the chapel; perhaps from wanton mischief —perhaps without motive of any kind.»

« He then chose an awful moment in which to act his gambols!»

« It may have been one whose knowledge was just equal to giving a theatrical effect to his silly deception. But are we to be cheated of our happiness by such weak devices; or to be miserable because Boston contains a fool!»

« I may be weak, and silly, and even impious in this terror, Lincoln,» she said, turning her softened looks upon his anxious face, and attempting to smile; « but it is assailing a

woman in a point where she is most sensitive. —You know that I have no reserve with you, now. Marriage with us is the tie that 'binds all charities in one,' and at the moment when the heart is full of its own security, is it not dreadful to have such mysterious presages, be they true, or be they false, answering to the awful appeal of the church!»

«Nor is the tie less binding, less important, or less dear, my own Cecil, to us. Believe me, whatever the pride of manhood may say, of high destinies, and glorious deeds, the same affections are deeply seated in our nature, and must be soothed by those we love, and not by those who contribute to our vanity. Why, then, permit this chill to blight your best affections in their budding?»

There was so much that was soothing to the anxiety of a bride, in his sentiments, and so much of tender interest in his manner, that he at length succeeded, in a great degree, in luring Cecil from her feverish apprehensions. As he spoke, a mantling bloom diffused itself over her cold and pallid cheeks, and when he had done, her eyes lighted with the glow of a

woman's confidence, and were turned on his own in bright, but blushing pleasure. She repeated his word « chill,» with an emphasis and a smile that could not be misconstrued, and in a few minutes, he entirely succeeded in quelling the uneasy presentiments that had gained a momentary ascendency over her clear and excellent faculties.

But notwithstanding Major Lincoln had reasoned so well, and with so much success, against the infirmity of his bride, he was by no means equal to maintain as just an argument with himself. The morbid sensibility of his mind had been awakened in a most alarming manner by the occurrences of the evening, though his warm interest in the happiness of Cecil had enabled him to smother them, so long as he witnessed the extent and nature of her apprehensions. But, exactly in the proportion as he persuaded her into forgetfulness of the past, his recollections became more vivid and keen; and, notwithstanding his art, he might not have been able to conceal the workings of his troubled thoughts from his companion, had not Agnes appeared,

and announced the desire of Mrs Lechmere to receive the bride and bridegroom in her sick chamber.

« Come, Lincoln,» said his lovely companion, rising at the summons, « we have been selfish in forgetting how strongly my grandmother sympathizes in our good or evil fortunes. We should have discharged this duty without waiting to be reminded of it.»

Without making any other reply than a fond pressure of the hand he held, Lionel drew her arm through his own, and followed Agnes into the little hall which conducted to the upper part of the dwelling.

« You know the way, Major Lincoln,» said Miss Danforth ; « and should you not, my Lady Bride can shew you. I must go and cast a worldly eye on the little banquet I have ordered, but which I fear will be labour thrown away, since Captain Polwarth has disdained to exhibit his prowess at the board. Truly, Major Lincoln, I marvel that a man of so much substance as your friend, should be frightened from his stomach by a shadow !»

Cecil even laughed, and in those sweet fe-

minine tones that are infectious, at the humour of her cousin; but the dark and anxious expression that gathered round the brow of her husband as suddenly checked her mirth.

« Let us ascend, Lincoln, » she said, instantly, « and leave mad Agnes to her household cares, and her folly. »

« Ay, go, » cried the other, turning away towards the supper-room— « eating and drinking is not ethereal enough for your elevated happiness; would I had a repast worthy of such sentimental enjoyment! Let me see— dew-drops and lovers' tears, in equal quantities, sweetened by Cupid's smiles, with a dish of sighs, drawn by moonlight, for piquancy, as Polwarth would say, would flavour a bowl to their tastes. The dew-drops might be difficult to procure, at this inclement season, and in such a night; but if sighs and tears would serve alone, poor Boston is just now rich enough in materials? »

Lionel, and his half-blushing, half-smiling companion, heard the dying sounds of her voice, as she entered the distant apartment, expressing, by its tones, the mingled plea-

santry and spleen of its mistress, and in the next instant they forgot both Agnes and her humour, as they found themselves in the presence of Mrs Lechmere.

The first glance of his eye at their expecting relative, brought a painful throb to the heart of Major Lincoln. Mrs Lechmere had caused herself to be raised in her bed, in which she was seated nearly upright, supported by pillows. Her wrinkled and emaciated cheeks were flushed with an unnatural colour, that contrasted too violently with the marks which age and strong passions had impressed with their indelible fingers, on the surrounding wreck of those haughty features, which had once been distinguished for great, if not attractive beauty. Her hard eyes had lost their ordinary expression of worldly care, in a brightness which caused them rather to glare than beam with flashes of unbridled satisfaction that could no longer be repressed. In short, her whole appearance brought a startling conviction to the mind of the young man, that whatever might have been the ardour of his own feelings in espousing her grandchild,

he had at length realized the fondest desires of a being so worldly, so designing, and, as he was now made keenly to remember, of one, also, who he had much reason to apprehend, was so guilty. The invalid did not seem to think a concealment of her exultation any longer necessary, for, stretching out her arms, she called to her child, in a voice raised above its natural tones, and which was dissonant and harsh from a sort of unholy triumph—

« Come to my arms, my pride, my hope, my dutiful, my deserving daughter! Come and receive a parent's blessing; that blessing which you so much deserve!»

Even Cecil, warm and consoling as was the language of her grandmother, hesitated an instant at the unnatural voice in which the summons was uttered, and advanced to meet her embrace with a manner less warm than was usual to her own ardent and unsuspecting nature. This secret restraint existed, however, but for a moment; for when she felt the encircling arms of Mrs Lechmere pressing her warmly to her aged bosom, she looked up into the face of her grandmother, as if to

thank her for so much affection, by her own guileless smiles and tears.

« Here, then, Major Lincoln, you possess my greatest, I had almost said, my only treasure!» added Mrs Lechmere—« she is a good, a gentle, and a dutiful child; and Heaven will bless her for it, as I do.» Leaning forward, she continued, in a less excited voice—« Kiss me, my Cecil, my bride, my Lady Lincoln! for by that loved title I may now call you, as yours, in the course of nature, it soon will be.»

Cecil, greatly shocked at the unguarded exultation of her grandmother, gently withdrew herself from her arms, and with eyes bent to the floor in shame, and burning cheeks, she willingly moved aside to allow Lionel to approach, and receive his share of the congratulations. He stooped to bestow the cold and reluctant kiss, which the offered cheek of Mrs Lechmere invited, and muttered a few incoherent words concerning his present happiness, and the obligation she had conferred. Notwithstanding the high and disgusting triumph which had broken through the usu-

ally cold and cautious manner of the invalid, a powerful and unbidden touch of nature mingled in her address to the bridegroom. The fiery and unnatural glow of her eyes even softened with a tear as she spoke——

« Lionel, my nephew, my son,» she said— « I have endeavoured to receive you in a manner worthy of the head of an ancient and honourable name; but were you a sovereign prince, I have now done my last and best in your favour!—Cherish her—love her—be more than husband—be all of kin to the precious child, for she merits all! Now is my latest wish fulfilled! Now may I prepare myself for the last great change, in the quiet of a long and tranquil evening to the weary and troublesome day of life!»

« Woman!» said a tremendous voice in the back-ground—« thou deceivest thyself!»

« Who,» exclaimed Mrs Lechmere, raising her body with a convulsive start, as if about to leap from the bed—« who is it speaks!»

« 'Tis I»—returned the well-remembered tones of Ralph, as he advanced from the door to the foot of her couch—« 'Tis I, Priscilla

Lechmere; one who knows thy merits and thy doom!»

The appalled woman fell back on her pillows, gasping for breath, the flush of her cheeks giving place to their former signs of age and disease, and her eye losing its high exultation in the glazed look of sudden terror. It would seem, however, that a single moment of reflection was sufficient to restore her spirit, and with it, all her deep resentments. She motioned the intruder away, by a violent gesture of the hand, and, after an effort to command her utterance, she said, in a voice rendered doubly strong by overwhelming passion—

«Why am I braved, at such a moment, in the privacy of my sick chamber? Have that madman or impostor, whichever he may be, removed from my presence!»

She uttered her request to deafened ears. Lionel neither moved nor answered. His whole attention was given to Ralph, across whose hollow features a smile of calm indifference passed, which denoted how little he regarded the threatened violence. Even Cecil,

who clung to the arm of Lionel, with all a woman's dependance on him she loved, was unnoticed by the latter, in the absorbing interest he took in the sudden re-appearance of one whose singular and mysterious character had, long since, raised such hopes and fears in his own bosom.

« Your doors will shortly be open to all who may choose to visit here,» the old man coldly answered; « why should I be driven from a dwelling where heartless crowds shall so soon enter and depart at will! Am I not old enough; or do I not bear enough of the aspect of the grave to become your companion? Priscilla Lechmere, you have lived till the bloom of your cheeks has given place to the colour of the dead; your dimples have become furrowed and wrinkled lines; and the beams of your once bright eye, have altered to the dull look of care—but you have not yet lived for repentance!»

« What manner of language is this!» cried his wondering listener, inwardly shrinking before his steady but glowing look. « Why am I singled from the world for this perse-

cution? are my sins past bearing; or am I alone to be reminded that sooner or later, age and death will come!—I have long known the infirmities of life, and may truly say that I am prepared for their final consequences.»

«'Tis well,» returned the unmoved and apparently immovable intruder—«take, then, and read the solemn decree of thy God; and may He grant thee firmness to justify so much confidence.»

As he spoke, he extended, in his withered hand, an open letter towards Mrs Lechmere, which the quick glance of Lionel told him bore his own name in the superscription. Notwithstanding the gross invasion of his rights, the young man was passive under the detection of this second and gross interference of the other in his most secret matters, watching with eager interest the effect the strange communication would produce on his aunt.

Mrs Lechmere took the letter from the stranger, with a sort of charmed submission, which denoted how completely his solemn manner had bent her to his will. The instant her look fell on the contents, it became fixed

and wild. The note was, however, short, and the scrutiny was soon ended. Still she grasped it with an extended arm, though the vacant expression of her countenance betrayed that it was held before an insensible eye. A moment of silent and breathless wonder followed. It was succeeded by a shudder which passed through the whole frame of the invalid, her limbs shaking violently, until the rattling of the folds of the paper was audible in the most distant corner of the apartment.

« This bears my name, » cried Lionel, shocked at her emotions, and taking the paper from her unresisting hand, « and should first have met my eye. »

« Aloud—aloud, dear Lionel, » said a faint but earnest whisper at his elbow; « aloud, I implore you, aloud ! »

It was not, perhaps, so much in compliance with this affecting appeal, in which the whole soul of Cecil seemed wrapped, as by yielding to the overwhelming flow of that excitement to which he had been aroused, that Major Lincoln was led to conform to her request. In a voice rendered desperately calm by his emo-

tions, he uttered the fatal contents of the note, in tones so distinct, that they sounded to his wife, in the stillness of the place, like the prophetic warnings of one from the dead:—

« The state of the town has prevented that close attention to the case of Mrs Lechmere, which her injuries rendered necessary. An inward mortification has taken place, and her present ease is only the forerunner of her death. I feel it my duty to say, that though she may live many hours, it is not improbable that she will die to-night.»

To this short, but terrible annunciation, was placed the well-known signature of the attending physician. Here was a sudden change, indeed! All had thought that the disease had given way, when it seemed it had been preying insidiously on the vitals of the sick. Dropping the note, Lionel exclaimed aloud, in the suddenness of his surprise—

« Die to-night! This is an unexpected summons, indeed!»

The miserable woman, after the first nerveless moment of her dismay, turned her looks anxiously from face to face, and listened in-

tently to the words of the note, as they fell from the lips of Lionel, like one eager to detect the glimmerings of hope in the alarmed expressions of their countenances. But the language of her physician was too plain, direct, and positive, to be misunderstood or perverted. Its very coldness gave it a terrific character of truth.

«Do you then credit it?» she asked, in a voice whose husky tones betrayed but too plainly her abject unwillingness to be assured. «You! Lionel Lincoln, whom I had thought my friend!»

Lionel turned away silently from the sad spectacle of her misery; but Cecil dropped on her knees at the bed-side, and clasping her hands, she elevated them, looking like a beautiful picture of pious hope, as she murmured—

«He is no friend, dearest grandmother, who would lay flattery to a parting soul! But there is a better and a safer dependence than all this world can offer!»

«And you, too!» cried the devoted woman, rousing herself with a strength and energy

that would seem to put the professional knowledge of her medical attendant at defiance—« do you also abandon me? You whom I have watched in infancy, nursed in suffering, fondled in happiness, ay! and reared in virtue—yes, that I can say boldly in the face of the universe! You, whom I have brought to this honorable marriage; would you repay me for all, by black ingratitude!»

« My grandmother! my grandmother! talk not thus cruelly to your child! but lean on the Rock of Ages for support, even as I have leaned on thee!»

« Away—away—weak, foolish child! Excess of happiness has maddened thee! Come hither, my son! let us speak of Ravenscliffe, the proud seat of our ancestors; and of those days we are yet to pass under its hospitable roofs. The silly girl thou hast wived would wish to frighten me!»

Lionel shuddered with inward horror while he listened to the forced and broken intonations of her voice, as she thus uttered the lingering wishes of her nature. He turned again from

the view, and, for a moment, buried his face in his hands, as if to exclude the world and its wickedness, together, from his sight.

« My grandmother, look not so wildly at us!» continued the gasping Cecil—« you may have yet hours, nay, days before you.» She paused an instant to follow the unsettled and hopeless gaze of an eye that gleamed despairingly on the objects of the room, and then, with a meek dependence on her own purity, dropping her face between her hands, she cried aloud in her agony—

« My mother's mother! Would that I could die for thee!»

« Die!» echoed the same dissonant voice as before, from a throat that already began to rattle with the hastened approaches of death—« who would die amid the festivities of a bridal!—Away—leave me. To thy closet, and thy knees, if thou wilt, but leave me.»

She watched, with bitter resentment, the retiring form of Cecil, who obeyed with the charitable and pious intention of complying literally with her grandmother's order, before she added—

«The girl is not equal to the task I had set her! All of my race have been weak, but I—my daughter—my husband's niece——»

«What of that niece?» said the startling voice of Ralph, interrupting the diseased wanderings of her mind—«that wife of thy nephew, the mother of this youth? Speak, woman, while time and reason are granted thee.»

Lionel now advanced to her bed-side, under an impulse that he could no longer subdue, and addressed her solemnly:

«If thou knowest aught of the dreadful calamity that has befallen my family,» he said, «or in any manner hast been accessary to its cause, disburthen thy soul, and die in peace. Sister of my grandfather! nay, more, mother of my wife! I conjure thee, speak—what of my injured mother?»

«Sister of thy grandfather—mother of thy wife!» repeated Mrs Lechmere, slowly, and in a manner that sufficiently indicated the unsettled state of her thoughts—«Yes, both are true!»

« Speak to me, then, of my mother, if you acknowledge the ties of blood—tell me of her dark fate?»

«She is in her grave, dead, rotten—yes, yes—her boasted beauty has been fed upon by beastly worms! What more would ye have, mad boy? Wouldst wish to see her bones in their winding-sheet?»

«The truth!» cried Ralph; «declare the truth, and thy own wicked agency in the deed.»

«Who speaks?» repeated Mrs Lechmere, dropping her voice from its notes of high excitement again to the tremulous cadency of debility and age, and looking about her at the same time, as if a sudden remembrance had crossed her brain; «surely I heard sounds I should know!»

«Here; look on me—fix thy wandering eye, if it yet has power to see, on me,» cried Ralph, aloud, as though he would command her attention at every hazard—«'tis I that speak to thee, Priscilla Lechmere.»

«What wouldst thou have? My daughter? she is in her grave! Her child? She is wedded

to another—Thou art too late! Thou art too late! Would to God thou hadst asked her of me in season!»

«The truth—the truth—the truth!» continued the old man, in a voice that rung through the apartment in wild and startling echoes—«the holy and undefiled truth! Give us that, and nought else.»

This singular and solemn appeal awakened the latest energies of the despairing woman, whose inmost soul appeared to recoil before his cries. She made an effort to raise herself once more, and exclaimed—

«Who says that I am dying? I am but seventy! and 'tis only yesterday I was a child—a pure, an uncontaminated child! He lies—he lies! I have no mortification—I am strong, and have years to live and repent in.»

In the pauses of her utterance, the voice of the old man was still heard shouting—

«The truth—the truth—the holy, undefiled truth!»

«Let me rise and look upon the sun,» continued the dying woman. «Where are ye all?

Cecil, Lionel—my children, do ye desert me now? Why do ye darken the room? Give me light—more light! more light! for the sake of all in heaven and earth, abandon me not to this black and terrific darkness!»

Her aspect had become so hideously despairing, that the voice of even Ralph was stilled, and she continued uninterruptedly to shriek out the ravings of her soul.

« Why talk to such as I of death! My time has been too short! Give me days—give me hours—give me moments! Cecil, Agnes, Abigail; where are ye?—help me, or I fall!»

She raised herself, by a desperate effort, from the pillows, and clutched wildly at the empty air. Meeting the extended hand of Lionel, she caught it with a dying grasp, gave a ghastly smile, under the false security it imparted, and falling backward again, her mortal part settled, with an universal shudder, into a state of eternal rest.

As the horrid exclamations of the deceased ended, so deep a stillness succeeded in the apartment, that the passing gusts of the gale

were heard sighing among the roofs of the town, and might easily be mistaken, at such a moment, for the moanings of unembodied spirits over so accursed an end.

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